300 kg of shabu worth ₱600M seized in Bulacan

Story in Across, PAGE A17

WHAT'S INSIDE

- PUP professor, driver shot dead NEWS /A6
- Oslo peace talks on verge of collapse NEWS /A7
- FPJ rebuffed in GMA country NEWS /A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Friday, February 13, 2004 ★★ 92 pages / 11 sections / vol. 19 / no. 67 P15

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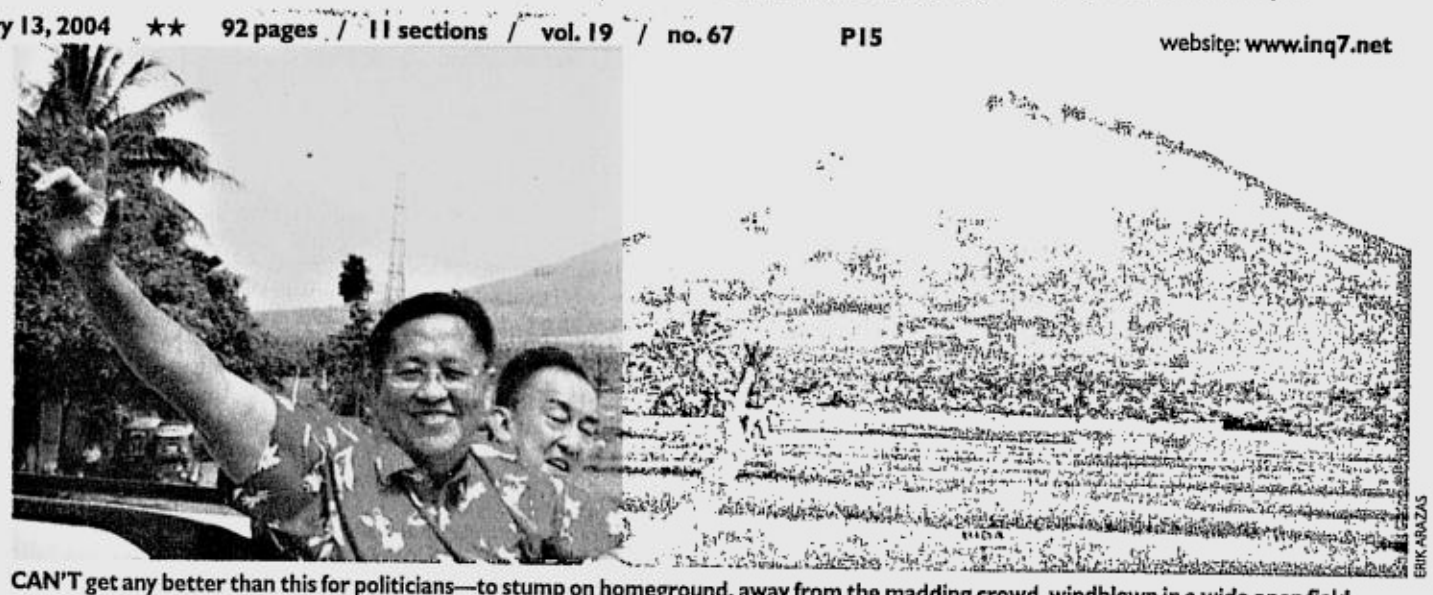
EDWIN BACASMAS

ALL SHOOK up: Closeup of FPJ's hand shows he's going through a bruising campaign. Merthiolate helps.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

READ all about it. K-4 Senate reelectionist Rodolfo Biazon denounces what he calls Roco's "P30-M lies" and warns he can very well throw "bigger" mud back at him. He plans to sue Roco.



ERIK ARAZAS

CAN'T get any better than this for politicians—to stump on homeground, away from the madding crowd, windblown in a wide open field of green framed by one of the country's natural wonders, Mayon Volcano. And it happened to presidential aspirant Raul Roco and his running mate Hermie Aquino as their campaign motorcade drives through Guinobatan, Albay, on Thursday.

Biazon calls Roco a liar

SC seeks legal eagles' aid on FPJ citizenship

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christine O. Avendaño

THE SUPREME Court has appointed four friends of the court to help it decide on the disqualification petition against opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

In a two-page en banc resolution, the tribunal invited retired Supreme Court Justice Vicente Mendoza, former 1986 Constitutional Commission member Fr. Joaquin Bernas S.J., former University of the Philippines College of Law Dean Merlin Magallona, and UP law professor Ruben Balane as friends of the court.

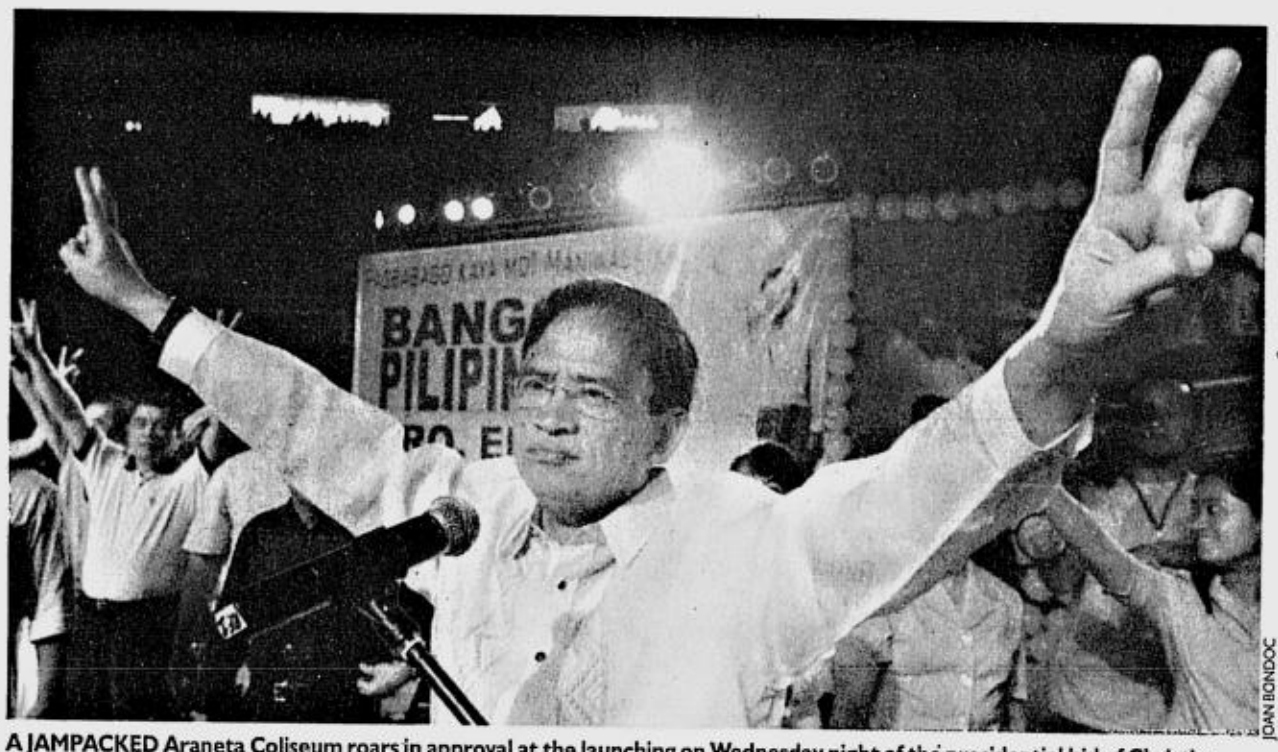
The court has set the oral arguments on the case at 1 p.m. on Thursday.

It also consolidated the three different petitions of lawyers Victorino Fornier, Maria Jeanette Tecson, Felix Desiderio, and Zoilo Velez for the tribunal to disqualify Poe because he is allegedly not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

But Poe's lawyer Estelito Mendoza said Wednesday that the Supreme Court could hear the disqualification cases against his client only after the elections.

He said that under Section 4, Article

SC SEEKS/ A19



JOAN BONDOC

A JAMPACKED Araneta Coliseum roars in approval at the launching on Wednesday night of the presidential bid of Christian televangelist Eddie Villanueva, who hits his rivals for turning their campaigns into entertainment.

Bro. Eddie sees a 'born-again' RP

ELECTION 2004

By Blanche S. Rivera

EVANGELIST Eddie Villanueva launched his "strategic, non-traditional" campaign for the presidential race on Wednesday night at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City in what appeared to be a revival festival for a righteous government.

A strange mix of "born-again" Christians from Luzon, Muslims from the Maharlika Village in Taguig City, and Catholics from Couples for Christ filled the coliseum to the rafters. Outside, people camped in the parking lot. Organizers estimated the crowd at 20,000.

Villanueva, standard-bearer of the fledgling political party Bangon Pilipinas National Renewal Movement (Bangon), expressed confidence that the passion of Filipinos for change would win over the blinding entertainment and empty words being peddled by his rivals.

With his campaign starting a day later than the other five presidential candidates, Villanueva took potshots at the presence of movie stars and traditional politicians in the campaign sorties of his rivals.

BRO. EDDIE/ A10

Lacson says 2 potential veeps asked for millions

By Christine O. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

NOTHING but "30 million lies coming from the camp of Raul Roco."

This was the response of reelectionist Sen. Rodolfo Biazon to the claim of Roco, standard-bearer of Alyansa ng Pag-asa, that he left Pag-asa after receiving an offer of P30 million from the administration K-4 coalition.

"Whoever said that, I'm calling them liars," Biazon, a senatorial candidate of K-4, said yesterday at a news conference in the Senate.

Other candidates like Sen. Noli de Castro were also reported to have received money from the administration. De Castro, however, denied receiving P750 million in exchange for his acceptance of President Macapagal-Arroyo's offer to be her running mate. He also denied reports that he deposited the money in a bank account in Hong Kong.

But opposition presidential candidate

BIAZON/ A20

Erap twits Ping over show biz

By Armand N. Nocum

THERE'S NO business like show business, especially during a political campaign period in the Philippines.

Ousted President Joseph Estrada, a veteran of both show biz and politics, yesterday analyzed the current scene as though to prove that he knows exactly how it goes.

That is to say, the truth beyond the "givens" which include, for instance, the fact that election time is the most lucrative for entertainers, and talent managers have a standard contract for bookings during this period.

Estrada, a very popular and mul-

ERAP/ A19

GMA rivals cite links of 2 new poll execs to Mike A

By Martin P. Marfil and Michael Lim Ubac

RIVAL candidates of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday lambasted her for the appointment of two election commissioners with known close links to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, hinting that they were chosen to help her win the May 10 polls.

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos yesterday tasked Commissioners-designate Virgillo Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona to oversee the polls in Regions 9, 10 and 12 and Region 11 and the Caraga region, respectively, amid calls to take back their appointments.

"There will also be a reassignment of the working committees, aside from the new regional assignments which would now be contiguous," Abalos said.

He said the commission would issue a resolution today to formalize their new assignments.

Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer Raul Roco urged Ms Macapagal to immediately recall the appointment of Garcillano and Barcelona to ensure clean and honest elections in May.

"On Dec. 30, 2002, she said she will assume responsibility for clean, honest elections in 2004, and then she decided to run, she's still responsible for honesty in these elections," Roco said in Legazpi City.

"When she put in two new Comelec commissioners when there are questions about them, (she knew that) our people will suffer."

According to Roco, he holds no per-

GMA RIVALS/ A9

PUNDITS' VIEW

RP needs to change politics of personalities

By Michelle V. Remo
Business

A VICTORY by actor Fernando Poe Jr. in the May 10 presidential election need not lead to the country's economic ruin as many investors fear, according to economic and political experts who spoke at yesterday's forum, "Economic and Political Prospects for Election Year 2004."

Fr. Jose CJ Magadia, executive director of Ateneo's Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, said the country's economic prospects would depend to a large extent on Poe's economic team and how much say its members would have in crafting and implementing government policies.

"If the team being brought together will have much influence on governance, then we might have something (economic and political scenario) that is not too far from what we have right now," he said.

RP NEEDS/ A10

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

OF DOVES and eagles: The icon of the peaceful revolt of Edsa I, former President Cory Aquino, pitches in to save the Philippine Eagle by donating her own work for auction.

Cory donates her painting for eagles to fly

By Volt Contreras

FROM PEOPLE Power icon who freed many a white dove signifying newfound peace and democracy, former President Corazon Aquino is now lending a hand to save the Philippine eagle.

Aquino, who has dabbled in oil painting since 1986, donated one of her pieces to the Philippine Eagle Foundation, which will soon have it auctioned to raise funds for the propagation of the endangered raptor.

She handed over "Colors, Colors Everywhere" to PEF officials in simple rites

CORY/ A20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Eastern and Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rains.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/13/04

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

FPJ rebuffed in GMA country

By Carlito Pablo

LUBAO, Pampanga—Popular movie star Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday brought his challenge to the present occupant of Malacañang to the very heartland of not only one but two Macapagal presidencies.

For his daring, Poe was reminded in not too gentle terms that Lubao, if not all of Pampanga, was not about to let down its favorite daughter, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lubao is the birthplace of the late President Diosdado Macapagal whose works and writings continue to inspire the daughter who followed his footsteps to the presidential Palace.

That's democracy

When he came down from his car to mingle with people at the public market, Poe was confronted by jeering young men, waving posters of a smiling Ms Macapagal and chanting "GMA, GMA, GMA."

Poe graciously saluted the pro-GMA crowd and said, "Thank you, thank you."

He told reporters: "This is a democracy."

Poe flew by helicopter early yesterday to San Fernando, the capital of vote-rich Pampanga, in only his second provincial sortie. He barnstormed Bulacan province the other day.

Generous gifts

Asked why he chose Pampanga, he said that he needed to bring to the Kapampangans his message about the coming "new dawn" for the country under his presidency.

But while Poe was warmly received, and even mobbed, in Bulacan, the reception for him in Pampanga was mixed, if not unenthusiastic.

As Poe's motorcade wound its way from San Fernando to Bacolor and Guagua towns, residents turned up on the sides of the road, receiving generous gifts of candies and calendars.

In Guagua, the owner of an eatery kept on flashing the thumbs-down sign as the Poe convoy passed.

Asked why, Oscar Pitangcol, 53, said in Filipino: "They'll have a hard time in Pampanga. We are for GMA."

He explained the apparently large number of his town mates turning out to watch the convoy, thus: "Like everybody else, they want to see movie stars."

His son Daniel, 24, put it more bluntly: "If somebody like GMA who is well-educated is having a hard time solving the problems of the country, what more of an elementary-school graduate."

As the motorcade snaked its way through the two-lane streets of Guagua, a man stoically pedaled his tricycle in the opposite direction, holding a placard that said: "Vote GMA."

Another man sat on top of a truck filled with coconut lumber, hoisting a pro-Macapagal poster.

Clusters of residents stood by chanting, "GMA, GMA, GMA."

As the convoy was about to enter Lubao, it started to drizzle, forcing Poe and his party to step down from the flatbed truck they were using as a platform and seek temporary shelter in their 4 x 4 wheel-drive vehicles.

Though Pampanga is indeed Macapagal country, it did not look like Poe would end up with a zero vote here. Pockets of townspeople could be seen on the roads from San Fernando to Lubao cheering for the actor.

Fishmongers, housewives and children mobbed Poe and planted kisses on his cheeks. His arms and those of his running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, were red with welts as hundreds of people grabbed at them just to get a brief handshake.

A group of people chorused at the top of their lungs in Guagua: "FPJ, FPJ, FPJ."

Some shouted "Idol, Idol, Idol" while others could be seen flashing Poe's index-finger-up sign.

It was enough to make Poe confidently predict: "I may score an upset win here."

He described the welcome from the Kapampangans as "fabulous."

But as a group of Lubao residents shouted as the convoy went by: "*Ayaw namin ng artista dito*" (We don't like movie stars here)." ***With a report from AFP***

GMA wades into Erap turf, but ex-gov won't commit

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday barnstormed through Rizal province, the birthplace of deposed President Joseph Estrada, but she failed to get a firm commitment from former Gov. Casimiro "Ito" Ynares, the province's political leader.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Ynares—whose wife is the current governor after he served out the 3-term limit for the province's highest post—said he had not yet made up his mind on whether to support the election bid of the President.

"Not that we're undecided but we're still feeling the pulse of the residents," said Ynares who accompanied the President in her caravan through Rizal. He clarified that his presence in the President's entourage was part of governance and not the campaign.

He doused speculations that he had jumped ship to the administration party after being named chair of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA). "My wife used to chair that body and I always had representatives there," Ynares said.

Ynares said Rizal province voted overwhelmingly in favor of his close friend Estrada in the 1998 elections because of his roots in the province. He could not say whether movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., the President's main rival, could win by a landslide in the province considering that he has a summer home in the Beverly Hills subdivision in Antipolo City.

"We have yet to see how my constituents would vote. Residents here have a deep sense of gratitude and if they see the president is doing her work for the province, she might have a chance."

Presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor admitted that the opposition has the edge in Rizal province because of Estrada's pervading influence. But Defensor remained optimistic that the President could still swing the estimated 40 percent of the voters in the province to her side.

The President kicked off her Rizal sortie at 9:30 a.m. in Binangonan where she, along with her running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro, distributed a total of P7.6 million in dividends to barangay leaders representing their share in the LLDA. She was accompanied on stage by her running mate.

She met with her K-4 senatorial slate (who campaigned separately in Rizal) at a restaurant in Cainta at lunch time. She then proceeded to Baras Pinugay Road at 2 p.m. where she inaugurated the connection to the Marikina-Infanta road to East Rizal. She said the road was meant to address the insurgency problem in this part of the region.

Erap on SC appointment: Who cares?

By Armand N. Nocum

IN A CLASSIC case of the right hand not knowing what the left is doing, ousted President Joseph Estrada and his supporters yesterday gave differing views on the promotion of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario to the Supreme Court.

In a statement, Estrada's political party Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino hit the appointment, saying it was part of Malacanang's scheme to delay the resolution of the plunder and graft case against Estrada pending before a Sandigan special division that Nazario had concurrently chaired.

But in a telephone interview Wednesday night, Estrada said he did not care.

The justice who would take Nazario's place would have to familiarize himself, or herself, all over again with the case. This would work to Estrada's disadvantage, he pointed out, because the replacement would rely "purely on court records," missing out on the "demeanor" of witnesses who had previously testified, including former Ilocos Sur governor Luis "Chavit" Singson.

"How can we expect impartiality?" Dilangalen demanded.

Estrada told the INQUIRER: "I don't recognize the authority of the special division (and so) it doesn't matter to me who they place there."

The former president has consistently hit the SC for creating the special court which, he says, has been tasked to convict him. He recalled that, to stress his point, he earlier withdrew his lawyers.

In fact, he said, he was currently preparing a television documentary to bring his case "straight" to the Filipino people.

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PR133	Daily	B737	09:10	10:20	1448
PR135	Daily	B737	15:30	16:40	1448
MANILA TO BUTUAN					
PR477	Daily	B737	10:45	12:15	2048
MANILA TO CAGAYAN					
PR181	Daily	B737	05:10	06:40	2048
PR183	Daily	B737	10:00	11:30	2048
PR185	Daily	B737	13:00	14:30	2048
MANILA TO CEBU					
PR843	Daily	EQV	05:00	06:15	1448
PR847	Daily	A330	07:30	08:45	1448
PR853	Daily	B744/A330	09:30	10:45	1448
PR857	Daily	A330	12:00	13:15	1448
PR861	We/Th/Sa/Su	A320/B37	13:00	14:15	1448
PR849	Daily	EQV	15:00	16:15	1448
PR863	Daily	EQV	17:30	18:45	1448
PR855	Daily	B737	19:30	20:45	1448
MANILA TO DAVAO					
PR809	Daily	A330	05:00	06:45	2048
PR811	Daily	A330	10:15	12:00	2048
PR815	Daily Ex Th	A330	15:40	17:25	2048
PR813	Thursday	A320	16:05	17:50	2048
MANILA TO ILOILO					
PR139	Daily	B737	05:20	06:25	1448
PR141	Daily	A320/B737	09:20	10:25	1448
PR143	Daily	B737	15:15	16:20	1448
MANILA TO KALIBO					
PR321	Daily	B737	09:30	10:25	1448
PR325	Daily	B737	15:10	16:05	1448
MANILA TO PUERTO PRINCESA					
PR195	Daily	A330/A320	08:00	09:15	1448
MANILA TO ROXAS					
PR189	Daily	B737	05:30	06:25	1348
MANILA TO TACLOBAN					
PR191	Daily	B737	06:00	07:15	1348
PR193	Daily	B737	13:30	14:45	1348
MANILA TO ZAMBOANGA					
PR123	Daily	B737	05:30	07:00	1998
PR125	Daily	B737	15:40	17:10	1998

Flight No.	Frequency	Aircraft	Departure	Arrival	One-Way Fare until 15Mar
BACOLOD TO MANILA					
PR132	Daily	A320/B737	07:25	08:25	1448
PR134	Daily	B737	11:00	12:00	1448
PR136	Daily	B737	17:20	18:20	1448
BUTUAN TO MANILA					
PR478	Daily	B737	13:15	14:45	2048
CAGAYAN TO MANILA					
PR182	Daily	B737	07:40	09:05	2048
PR184	Daily	B737	12:20	13:45	2048
PR186	Daily	B737	15:20	16:45	2048
CEBU TO MANILA					
PR842	Daily	EQV	05:00	06:10	1448
PR844	Mo/We/Th/Fr/Su	EQV	07:30	08:40	1448
PR848	Daily	A330	09:30	10:40	1448
PR854	Daily	B744/A330	12:00	13:10	1448
PR858	Daily	EQV	15:00	16:10	1448
PR852	Daily	EQV	17:30	18:40	1448
PR866	Daily	EQV	19:30	20:40	1448
PR868	Th/Su	A330	20:30	21:40	1448
PR856	We/Fr/Sa/Su	B737	21:30	22:40	1448
DAVAO TO MANILA					
PR810	Daily	A330	07:45	09:25	2048
PR812	Daily	A330	13:00	14:40	2048
PR816	Daily Ex Th	A330	18:25	20:05	2048
PR814	Thursday	A320	18:40	20:20	2048
ILOILO TO MANILA					
PR140	Daily	B737	07:25	08:25	1448
PR142	Daily	A320/B737	11:25	12:25	1448
PR144	Daily	B737	17:00	18:00	1448
KALIBO TO MANILA					
PR322	Daily	B737	11:15	12:05	1448
PR326	Daily	B737	16:45	17:35	1448
PUERTO PRINCESA TO MANILA					
PR196	Daily	A330/A320	10:30	11:45	1448
ROXAS TO MANILA					
PR190	Daily	B737	07:25	08:20	1348
TACLOBAN TO MANILA					
PR192	Daily	B737	08:05	09:15	1348
PR194	Daily	B737	15:25	16:35	1348
ZAMBOANGA TO MANILA					
PR124	Daily	B737	07:50	09:20	1998
PR126	Daily	B737	17:50	19:20	1998

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Roco may adopt bets

By TJ Burgonio

WITH the campaign season in full swing, presidential candidate Raul Roco has not ruled out the possibility of adopting "guest senatorial candidates" from the camps of his rivals President Macapagal-Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Roco, standard bearer of Alyansa ng Pagasa, said the alliance may endorse candidates from the other coalitions after Cristy Ramos-Jalasco was forced to drop her senatorial bid on the prodding of her father, former President Fidel V. Ramos.

"Maybe we'll put in a replacement or a guest candidate," Roco said in a talk with INQUIRER editors last Monday.

Jalasco, one of only eight AP senatorial candidates, was prevailed upon by her father to drop her political plans before the start of the campaign period. While she did not formally withdraw her candidacy, she did not join any campaign rallies.

The elder Ramos, chair emeritus of the ruling Lakas-CMD party, is supporting Ms Macapagal. His sister, former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, is backing Poe.

Jaime Galvez-Tan, Roco's political adviser, said the AP is holding talks with some candidates in Ms Macapagal's K-4 coalition and Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) "who share a common platform with us."

"There are several being considered. These are people who we feel deserve to win because they are high performers, have high credibility and integrity, and have no trace of graft and corruption," Galvez-Tan said in a phone interview.

Galvez-Tan declined to identify the candidates, however, so as not "to sow intrigue in their parties" and jeopardize their candidacies. Besides, he added, they hadn't made up their minds yet and were still "sorting things out."

The guest candidates will be known in two weeks, he said, adding that the AP does not intend to fill all 12 senatorial slots because experience has shown that most voters only write down the names of four to eight senatorial candidates on election day.

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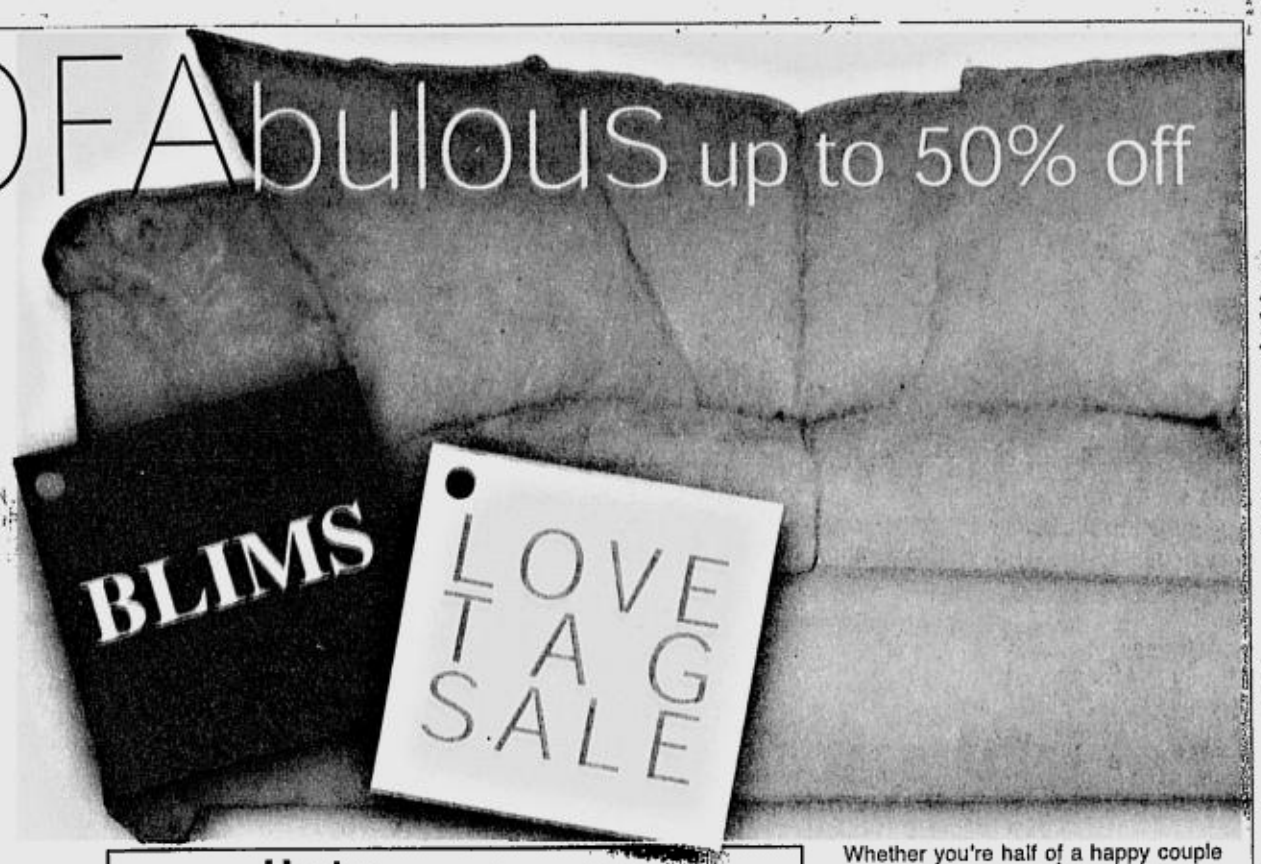

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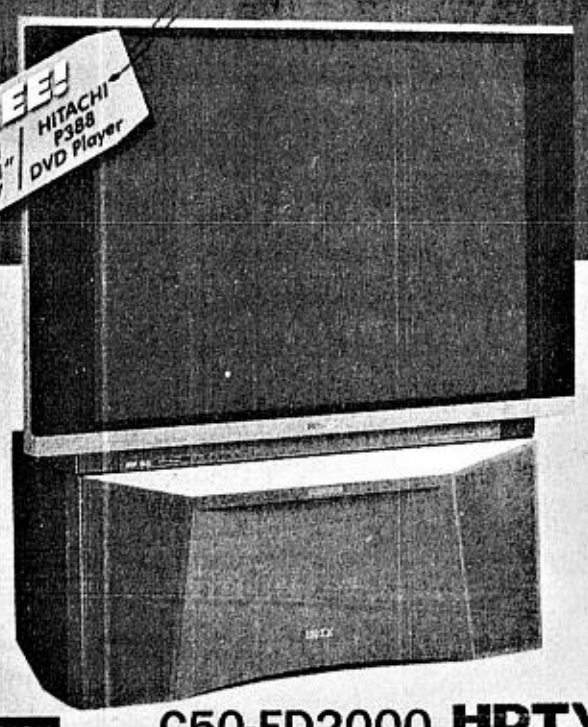

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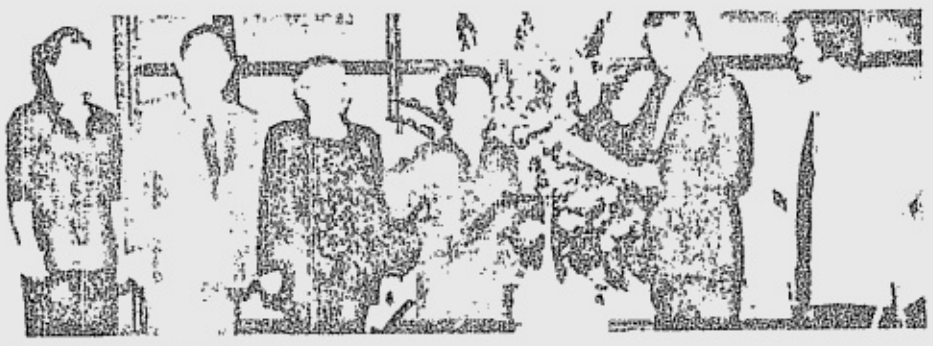

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Palace to set aside P3.8B for Comelec

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUDGET department yesterday said it would ask Malacañang to approve the release of the P3.8 billion being sought by the Commission on Elections for the May polls.

The problem however is that Congress failed to pass the 2004 budget bill which contained the P3-billion appropriation for the May elections, and which the Comelec yesterday asked the budget department to release.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said she would have to ask the President for permission to look for funding sources and to release the funds for the elections.

"We don't want to be accused of any hanky-panky so everything has to go through a process," she said.

Boncodin also said the Comelec's request for an additional P800 million needed to be scrutinized.

"We want to know why they needed the additional funding. It could be that the P3 billion provided for electronic elections and now that we are shifting back to manual, they may need more funds," she explained.

Last year, the government spent about P300 million for pre-election preparations, according to Boncodin.

The House had proposed a supplemental budget of P5.4 billion to cover election expenses and the increase in salaries of military personnel and teachers. The supplemental budget was meant to facilitate the release of the funds while the budget bill was pending.

But even the supplemental budget failed to pass Congress.

Under the proposed 2004 General Appropriations Act, the government must collect P674.4 billion in revenues and spend only P872.2 billion to keep the budget deficit well within the P197.8 billion ceiling.

Congress having failed to pass the 2004 GAA, the government will be forced to adopt last year's budget.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said that even if the 2003 budget is reenacted, the government would keep the deficit target at P197.8 billion rather than last year's P202 billion.

Broadcaster's slay denounced

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and international media watchdogs yesterday condemned the killing of radio broadcaster Ruel Endrinal, and the government promised it won't go unpunished.

Police said they don't know who shot Endrinal, 45, while he was heading to work at radio station dzRC in Legazpi City last Wednesday.

Endrinal was the second journalist gunned down in less than three months, and according to the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, the 44th reporter killed in the Philippines since 1986.

"This incident is a desperate attempt to curtail the freedom of speech and of the press and will not go unpunished," the President said in a statement.

"We must keep a tight watch on election-related violence," Ms Macapagal said as the country this week entered the often violent campaign season for the May 10 presidential polls.

Endrinal had hosted a political commentary show on the radio in which he spoke out against local politicians and criminal gangs. He also published a regional newspaper, "Bicol Metro News."

Death threats

His wife and colleagues were quoted as saying he had recently received death threats.

In Legazpi City, Endrinal's widow Mina yesterday asked the authorities to give investigators a two-day deadline to identify the killers.

But Albay police director Pedro U. Tango, who heads the task force Gwapo that is investigating the killing, refused to be tied to a deadline.

"What are we, God? Even God worked carefully to create the world in seven days!" he said even as he assured reporters that the task force already had good leads although it has yet to review the evidence.

The Commission on Human Rights Bicol regional director Pelayo P. Senar said the CHR was conducting a separate investigation of the killing.

The Paris-based international press watchdog Reporters Without Borders yesterday condemned the murder of Endrinal, saying the killing could herald a new campaign of violence against reporters in the build-up to elections.

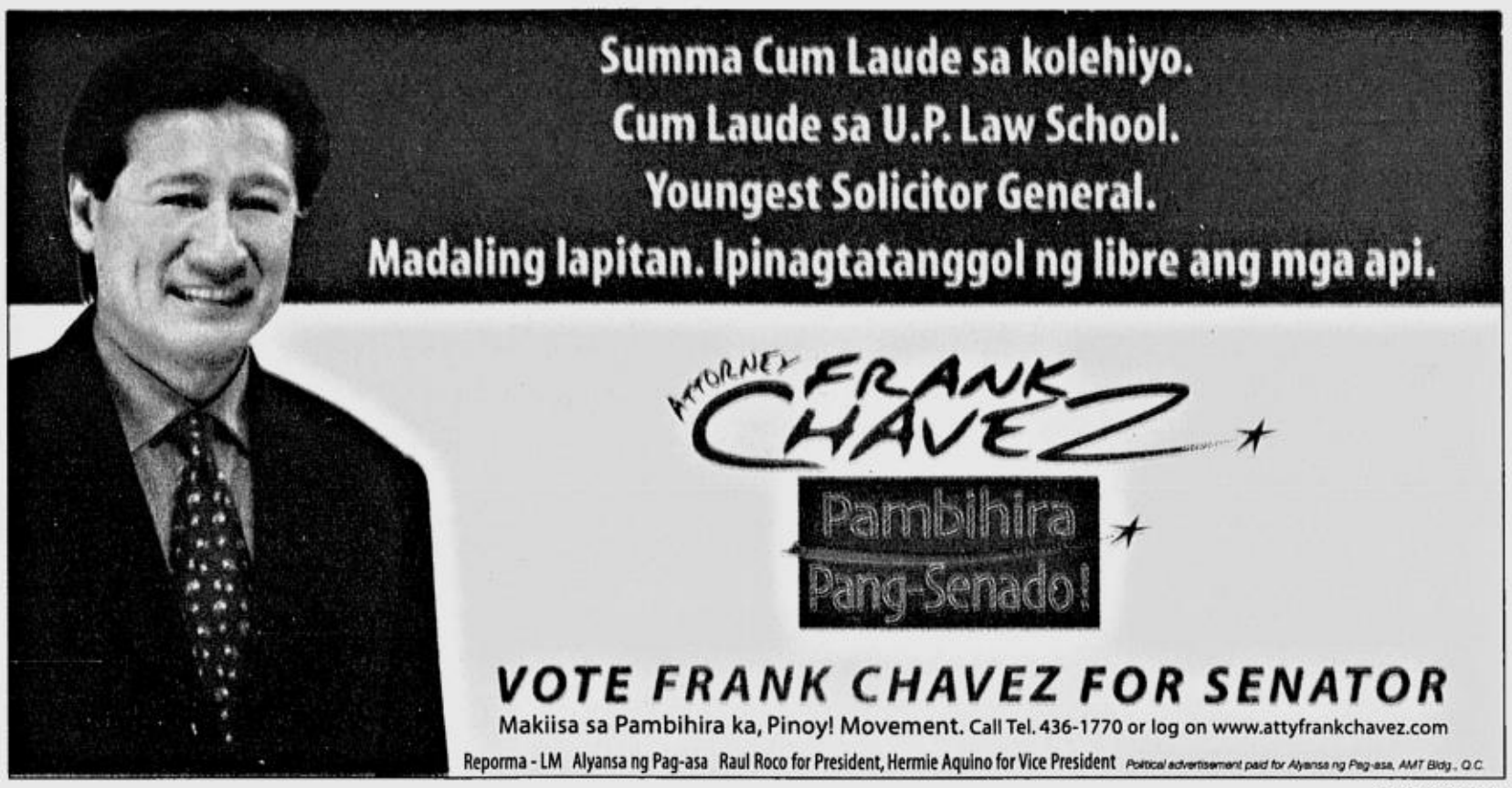
Endrinal was a known critic of the local political elite and his murder, "if left unpunished... could open the way for more attacks on journalists," the group said in a statement.

The Albay unit of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas in a resolution yesterday asked the President to order the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police to speed up the probe.

Members of the Prensa-Bicol, which Endrinal had headed as president, said they would wear black armbands in protest while the Albay-Legazpi Press Association Inc. pressed for an immediate solution to the case.

The Federation of the Provincial Press Clubs of the Philippines and the Publishers and Editors League of the Philippines said "the manner with which the brutal act has been committed tells of the audacity of the perpetrators."

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, the FP-PCP and the PELP said they were outraged at the latest killing of a journalist. *AP, AFP and Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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State university exec, driver shot dead

UNIDENTIFIED gunmen fatally shot a state university official and his driver as they were heading home from a visit to a campus in San Pablo City, officials said yesterday.

Two men on a motorcycle fired shots at Efren Turla, director for branches and extension services of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and his driver, Salvador Escanilla, when their vehicle stopped at an intersection Wednesday in San Pablo city, the officials said.

Four other people in the vehicle were unhurt, said Samuel Salvador, acting university president.

"He was a very honest and righteous man. This teacher was known for his integrity," he said.

Turla, 40, was well known as a student activist who led protests against late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the mid-1980s, heading the Manila branch of the left-wing League of Filipino Students.

After Marcos was toppled in 1986, he taught sociology, political science and human rights courses at the Polytechnic University.

He also helped set up and headed the university's Human Rights Center. *AP*

Correction

THROUGH an inadvertence, the word "Asean" was inserted in the lead of the story with the head "Mindanao development key to Asean peace-KL."

The lead should have read thus: "Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi Tuesday said Malaysia was prepared to help in the economic development of Mindanao to bring about peace in the region."

The writer of the story probably should have used the phrase "on the island" (meaning Mindanao) or "in the Southern Philippines" to avoid ambiguity in the use of word "region."

Accordingly, the head should have read thus: "Malaysia to help RP/ in Mindanao development." -Ed.

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Peace talks on verge of collapse

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PEACE talks aimed at ending 30 years of insurgency are on the verge of collapse after the government refused to come up with a joint resolution asking the United States and the European Union to lift the "foreign terrorist organization" tag they had pinned on the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Luis Jalandoni, chair of the National Democratic Front panel in the talks, said yesterday the rebels were "inclined" to wait for a new President in May before resuming the long-stalled negotiations. The NDF is the umbrella organization of the CPP.

The government and communist panels are meeting for four days in Oslo, Norway, in talks aimed at restarting the stalled peace negotiations.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo is throwing away a great opportunity," Jalandoni told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview from Oslo. "We're not at all optimistic that anything would be agreed upon with this kind of blackmail."

He said all the expectations of a final peace agreement before the May 10 elections are turning out to be a "gimmick" to help Ms Macapagal win the presidency.

He said the government panel insisted it could not agree to any measures against the terrorist tag until the administration had gotten "enough advantages" at the end of the current round of negotiations.

The government panel, in effect, wants the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, to "surrender, incriminate ourselves, and agree that we're responsible for all the violence," Jalandoni said.

He said chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III and the rest of the panel "wasted" the entire Wednesday session, preventing discussion of the terrorist tag issue which was fourth on the 20-point agenda.

He said both panels were supposed to take up the joint resolution urging the US and European Union to drop the CPP-NPA and Jose Maria Sison, NDF consultant and panel adviser, from their list of foreign terrorist organizations.

The resolution would also acknowledge that the tag was a violation of the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIL).

What the government wants, Jalandoni said, is for the rebels to end hostilities, including the collection of permit-to-campaign fees in areas under NPA control. "It's as if the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police have no roles in any of these hostilities."

He said the government panel also insisted the NDF agree to an "enhanced negotiation process" which was a "disguised version of a final peace agreement."

"The truth is out that the Macapagal regime is not interested in serious peace negotiations and is merely trying to cause the capitulation of the NDF through blackmail," he said in a statement faxed to the INQUIRER.

Gun-toting mayoral bet held

By Christian V. Esguerra

A MAYORAL candidate and two of his supporters were arrested in possession of high-powered firearms and explosives at a police checkpoint in Nueva Ecija on Wednesday.

Antonio Romero, who is running for mayor of Sta. Rosa town, was the primary suspect in the bombing of his rival's home and in at least three other incidents in the province.

Romero's rival is incumbent Santa Rosa Mayor Marlon Marcelo, who was not hurt in the explosion.

Police arrested Romero, Pedro Padilla and Anastacio de Lara at a checkpoint in Barangay Cojuangco at around 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, according to Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police director.

Romero's red Toyota Corolla yielded an AK-47 assault rifle with scope, a Gold Cup .45-cal. pistol and a 9-mm Uzi machine pistol. Querol said the candidate could not produce documents exempting him from the election gun ban.

Also found in the car, Querol said, were more than one kg of explosives such as trinitrotoluene (TNT) and ammonium nitrate and improvised blasting caps.

Querol said the explosives found in Romero's possession were similar to the bomb that went off in front of Marcelo's house. There were no other casualties in that blast.

Not enough chicken to export

THE PHILIPPINES, which has so far escaped the Asian bird flu crisis, lacks the poultry supply base to be able to take advantage of export bans placed on countries hit by the virus, officials said yesterday.

With 10 Asian countries suffering outbreaks that have disrupted and in some cases devastated their poultry sectors, the Philippines is considering exporting chicken to Japan, Brunei and Vietnam.

"It could result in a temporary spike in exports but even then, even if there is that big opportunity, the question is—can we supply?" Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri told reporters. *AFP*

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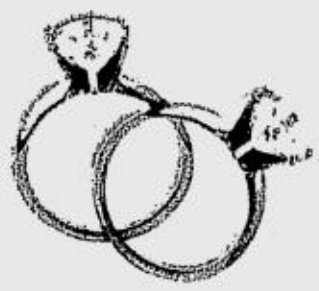
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Stolen mummies to be returned to Kabayan caves

CENTURIES-OLD mummies of four tribesmen, believed stolen years ago, have been recovered and will be returned to a cave in an ancient ritual of thanksgiving, an official said yesterday.

The mummies, which have deteriorated badly, were found in northern Sagada town, in Mountain Province, and are to be returned Tuesday to a cave in Kabayan, in nearby Benguet province, where the remains were stolen in the 1960s, National Museum curator Orlando Abinion said.

"It's a big event to the natives there. It's like their long-lost ancestors have come home," Abinion said.

Ibaloi tribesmen of Kabayan, a scenic town at the foot of mountain farm terraces plan to slaughter farm animals to appease their god and offer thanks for the return of the mummies, estimated to be 500 years old, he said.

The tribesmen, who have been searching for about 50 mummies stolen from their burial caves, located the mummies recently in Sagada, where a villager stored the remains in a warehouse, claiming they belonged to his ancestors.

The tribesmen pointed to the sitting-position of the bodies, a distinct feature of Kabayan mummies, and other signs and got the mummies back, he said.

The Philippines is one of the few countries in the world where mummification was practiced by early upland tribesmen.

Unlike in ancient Egypt, the internal organs of Benguet mummies were not removed and the remains were not wrapped in cloth. The mummification process took months, centering on the slow drying of the cadaver using a small fire.

For centuries until the arrival of Spanish colonizers in the 1500s, tribesmen in Benguet mummified their royalty. The practice ended as the Spanish brought Christianity and underground burial.

The mummies were undisturbed for centuries until they were discovered in the 1900s by loggers in Benguet's jungles.

Vandalism and theft became widespread in the 1970s. Some of the Kabayan caves were included on a list of the 100 most endangered historical sites by the World Monument Watch in the 1990s.

AP

3 Filipinos dead in UAE plane crash

By Jerome Aning

ONLY ONE Filipino survived the crash of Kish Air Flight 7170 in the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday. Passenger Jorge Cruz is in a stable condition at the al-Qassimi Hospital in Sharjah, UAE, according to Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert.

Cruz, one Iranian and one Egyptian were the only survivors of the crash which killed 43 other passengers and crew. The updated manifest listed four, not two Filipino passengers as earlier reported, in the ill-fated Fokker 50 twin-turboprope plane.

The Filipino fatalities are: Francisco Britanico, Danilo Manalese and Engelbert Salenga. The list of passengers include at least 18 Iranians, 12 Indians, four Egyptians, two Algerians, one Syrian, a Nepalese, Bangladeshi, Sudanese, Cameroonian and an Arab.

Twenty-five of the 40 passengers on the plane were foreign workers in the UAE who had left the country only to renew their visas. Expatriates, who make up 85 percent of the population of 3.8 million, need to briefly exit and re-enter to comply with a UAE visa regulation.

Kish, an Iranian island in the Gulf, is a favorite destination for visa changers. At less than 500 dirhams ($135) Kish Airline offers the cheapest "visa change" flights. The plane was returning from the island when it crashed Tuesday.

The following day, UAE President Sheik Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan abolished the law. An official statement said that workers who arrive on visit visas and find jobs, would no longer have to exit and re-enter.

Albert hailed the decision of UAE authorities to abolish the visa rule.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2004
BULACAN (BALIWAG): AND PAMPANGA (CANDABA)
BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT BALIWAG 324YW-32YW AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALIWAG 322YW
Portion of Baliwag town proper including ALC Baliwag Cinema, Mega Shoppe, St. Mary's College, New Frontier Subd., Emel Subd., Baliwag Municipal Hall, Pearl, F. Calderon, F. Rustia, Camacito, J. Burgos, Plaridel, Ponce Sts. and portion of Gil Carlos St. in Bulacan.
Along B.S. Aquino Ave. and San Roque National Road from Baliwag town proper to and including Bgys. Visal Sto. Cristo, Visal Sto. Niño, Visal San Pablo, Bahay Pare, Paligui, Pulong Palasan, Pulong Gubat, Talang, Himakay in Candaba, Pampanga; Guadalope Vill., Millenium Grains, Bgys. Hinukay, Barangka, Pactan, Paco, Barit, Pansumaloc, Ulingao, San Roque, Sto. Niño, Solivan, Pagala and Catulinan in Baliwag, Bulacan.

REASON: Urgent relocation of distribution facilities due to road widening project and construction of Baliwag flyover in Baliwag, Bulacan.

FRIDAY TO SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13-14, 2004
RIZAL (TAYTAY)
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (FRI., 02/13/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:30AM AND 5:00AM (SAT., 02/14/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DOLORES 43XM
Portion of Ortigas Ave. Ext. (north side) from Valley Golf Rd. to Kaytikling junction including PAMCOR Cpd. (except Plant 1 and 2 along Finch Drive), Baltao Cpd., Palmera Homes I, Cielito Homes and portion of L. Wood St. in Bgy. Dolores.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (FRI., 02/13/04) AND 5:00AM (SAT., 02/14/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DOLORES 43XM
Portion of Ortigas Ave. Ext. near and including Panasonic Cpd. and Singer Industrial Cpd. in Bgy. San Isidro.

REASON: Urgent replacement of pole badly burnt at base along Ortiga Ave. Ext. near Panasonic Cpd. in Bgy. San Isidro, Taytay, Rizal.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2004
RIZAL (CAINTA)
BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 6:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT CAINTA 60XG
Capasco Cpd. in Cainta, Rizal.

REASON: Urgent repair of overheating electrical component inside Meralco-Cainta substation.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2004
RIZAL (CAINTA)
BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 3:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ST. ANTHONY 61ZN
Venus Steel and Midland Steel Compounds in Bgy. San Juan, Cainta.

REASON: Repair work inside Meralco-St. Anthony substation.

BULACAN (BOCAUE)
BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. MARIA 424YU
The whole of Intercity Industrial Estate in Bo. Wakas.

REASON: Cleaning, replacement and washing of contaminated line devices at Intercity Industrial Estate in Bo. Wakas, Bocaue, Bulacan.

MAKATI CITY: AND PASIG CITY
BETWEEN 9:30AM AND 10:00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 1:00PM AND 1:30PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TAGUIG 48ZL
Along Ellsco Road from Meralco-Taguig substation to C-5 Bridge including M. Concepcion in Bgy. Buting, Pasig City.
Along Guadalupe-Pateros Road from M. Malvar to and including Liwasan Makati Park in Bgy. West Rembo, Makati City.

BETWEEN 9:30AM AND 1:30PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TAGUIG 48ZL
Portion of Guadalupe-Pateros Road from M. Malvar St. to 29th St. in Bgy. West Rembo, Makati City.

REASON: Maintenance work along Guadalupe-Pateros Road in Bgy. West Rembo, Makati City.

MONDAY TO TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16-17, 2004
VALENZUELA CITY
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (MON., 02/16/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (TUE, 02/17/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALINTA 43YB - BAGBAGUIN 410YZ
Portion of Paso de Blas Road from T. Santiago St. to Malinta Interchange including Genwood, Moldex Products, Luzon Mahogany Lumber, G. Angeles and P. Santiago Sts. in Bgy. Paso De Blas.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (MON., 02/16/04) AND 6:00AM (TUE, 02/17/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUITS MALINTA 43YB - BAGBAGUIN 410YZ; AND BAGBAGUIN 415YZ
Portion of Paso De Blas and Bagbaguin Road from G. Molina St. to Malinta Interchange including Asiatic Pulps and Paper Mill, IRC Compound and Goodyear Industrial Compound in Bgys. Paso De Blas and Bagbaguin.

REASON: Relocation of primary lines along G. Molina and Bagbaguin Road in Bgy. Bagbaguin.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2004
BULACAN (SAN JOSE DEL MONTE)
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 9:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 1:30PM AND 2:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT GAYA-GAYA 32YS AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT GAYA-GAYA 34YS
Portion of Bocaue Provincial Road from Meralco-Gaya-Gaya substation to and including Daang Barrio Road in San Jose Del Monte.
Portion of Daang Barrio Road from Poblacion to and including Dulong Bayan, Carissa Homes Phases 5-A, 5-B, 4-A and 4-B in San Jose Del Monte.
Along Bocaue Provincial Road from Meralco-Gaya-Gaya substation to and including Quirino Highway, Skyline Road, Robes III Subd., Paradise Farm Drive Tanawin Road and Bgys. San Isidro Labrador and Kaybanban in San Jose Del Monte.

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT GAYA-GAYA 34YS
Portion of Daang Barrio Road from Bocaue Provincial Road to and including Poblacion, Verde Heights Subd. and SJDM Water Pump in San Jose Del Monte.

REASON: Maintenance work along Daang Barrio Road in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

CAVITE (TERNATE AND NAIC)
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 5:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS TERNATE 41TN; AND PUERTO AZUL 33XX
Palicpican #5 Deepwell Pumphouse, Camandag Pumphouse, Ternate Dev't Corp. Field Office, Mira Hills Subdivision, Ocean View Villas, Puerto Azul Beach and Hotel Complex. Cluster Hotel Bldg., Caysubic Cottages, Paniman Pumphouse, Dr. R. E. Panillio Rest House and Caylabne Bay Resort in Ternate.

REASON: Annual preventive maintenance and testing work inside Transco-Ternate substation.

TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17-18, 2004
VALENZUELA CITY
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (TUE, 02/17/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 3:30AM AND 4:00AM (WED., 02/18/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUITS BOCAUE 44YE; AND MALINTA 42YB
Portion of McArthur Highway from Hermoso St. to Meycauayan College including Furama Cpd., G. Santiago, Blanco, Magiliw, Makisig, T. Santiago, Veite Reales, Molina, Fernando, A. Mendoza, G. Lazaro, Villa Encarnacion, Esteban Sts., Road 1 and 6, Flexco, Atis Roads, Feliz Ville, Antonio Subd., Lena Subd., Darigold Subd., Pacheco Subd., Standard Cereal, Valenzuela Institute, Valenzuela Memorial Park, NFA-ACA Cpd., Occidental Foundry and one-feed of Meralco-North Distribution Division in Bgys. Malanday and Dalandanan.
Along A. Marcelo, San Simon and F. San Diego Sts. from Rincon Road to and including Masipag, Mento Sts., San Simon Subd., Mento Subd. and San Martin de Porres Subd. in Bgy. Dalandanan.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE, 02/17/04) AND 4:00AM (WED., 02/18/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUITS BOCAUE 44YE; AND MALINTA 42YB
Along McArthur Highway from Meralco-Malinta substation to near T. Santiago St. including S. Bernardo and Villanueva Sts. in Bgy. Dalandanan.

REASON: Various maintenance work along McArthur Highway in Bgy. Dalandanan, Valenzuela City.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2004
BULACAN
BETWEEN 1:00AM AND 6:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT CALUMPIT 325YQ; AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT 38YQ
Along Pulilan-Calumpit National Road from McArthur Highway to Pulilan Interchange including Calumpit District Hospital, Freyssinet compound, Bgys. Sto. Niño, Canyugan and Balite in Calumpit; Bgys. Dampol, Dampol-3, Tianco St. and Prime-Link Garments in Pulilan.
Along McArthur Highway from Meralco-Calumpit substation to and including Bgys. Gatbuca, Sapang Bayan, Frances, Balugao, Iba O'Este, Bulusan, Sta. Lucia, San Jose, Meyto, San Miguel, Bo. Gugo, Velasquez, M. Serrano, Balugao Sts. and San Agustin Road in Calumpit.
Bgys. Sta. Cruz, Sto. Rosario, major portion of Bgys. San Sebastian, Sta. Monica, Tampoc and San Isidro in Hagonoy.

REASON: Relocation of facilities affected by proposed Malolos flyover along McArthur Highway corner A. Mabini St. in Malolos, Bulacan.

CAVITE
BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 5:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS SILANG 32WS, 34WS AND 35WS AND TAGAYTAY 32XS, 33XS, 34XS AND 35XS
The whole of Tagaytay City, Alfonso, Amadeo and Mendez.
The whole town of Silang except Bgys. Maguyam, Bulihan and Milagrosa.
Bgys. Karasutsi and Pilipit in Indang.
Bgy. Pulo ni Sara in Maragondon.

REASON: 1. Various maintenance work along Dasmariñas-Tagaytay 115 kV transmission lines. (Transco Job)
2. Maintenance work in various places in Tagaytay City, Cavite. (Meralco Job)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2004
CAVITE (MAGALLANES, TERNATE AND NAIC)
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM AND THEN 4:45PM AND 5:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TERNATE 31ZO
Along Tulay B Road from Real St. to and including Bgys. Kayabas, Balwak, Dalusan, Bendita, Pulo, Urdaneta, Kabulusan and Talipusngo in Magallanes.

REASON: Maintenance work along Tulay B. Road in Bgy. Kabulusan, Magallanes.

THURSDAY TO FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19-20, 2004
LAGUNA (STA. ROSA)
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (THU., 02/19/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00AM AND 4:30AM (FRI., 02/20/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. ROSA II 42WL
Portion of Main Ave. and Spine Road from near Balibago - Tagaytay Provincial Road to Meralco-Sta. Rosa II substation along North Science Ave. in Laguna Technopark, Bgy. Don Jose.
Portion of Balibago-Tagaytay Provincial Road from Laguna Bel-Air to near Spine Road including Purefoods Breeder Farm, SPV Phils. and Filipinas Synthetic in Bgy. Don Jose.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (THU., 02/19/04) AND 4:30AM (FRI., 02/20/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. ROSA II 42WL
Portion of Balibago-Tagaytay Provincial Road from Spine Road to near Paseo De Sta. Rosa.
Along Sta. Rosa Business Park Subd. Road from near Balibago-Tagaytay Provincial Road to and including Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club in Canlubang including Phil. Health Food and Chemfield in Bgy. Don Jose.

REASON: Relocation of primary lines along Balibago-Tagaytay Provincial Road in Bgy. Don Jose, Sta. Rosa.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2004
MAKATI CITY
BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT FORBES PARK 17VC
Major portion of Urdaneta Village including Recoletos Cabildo, Cruzadas, Cerrada, Farol, Beaterio, Urdaneta Ave., Sto. Domingo, San Ignacio; portion of Real, Sto. Tomas, Sta. Potenciana and Paseo de Roxas Sts.

REASON: Preventive maintenance work at Meralco Forbes Park substation.

FRIDAY TO SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20-21, 2004
CAVITE (DASMARIÑAS AND GEN. TRIAS)
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (FRI., 02/20/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (SAT., 02/21/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DASMARIÑAS 40DA
Portion of Gen. E. Aguinaldo Highway from Transco-Dasmariñas substation to near Salitran-Salawag Road including Petron Gas Station, portions of Agustina Subd., San Gregorio Heights Subd. and Arcontica Subd. in Dasmariñas.
Portion of Gov. D. Mangubat Ave. (Congressional Road) from near Villa Nicasia to DBB Highway in Dasmariñas.
Along DBB Highway from Bgy. Burol to and including Phil. Interfashion Compound, Modas Intl., South Charbel, Windward Subd. and Town and Country Subd. in Dasmariñas.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (FRI., 02/20/04) AND 6:00AM (SAT., 02/21/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DASMARIÑAS 40DA
Portion of Gov. D. Mangubat Ave. (Congressional Road) from near Aguinaldo Highway to and including Villa Nicasia, De La Salle University and Pasong Lawin Compound in Dasmariñas.

REASON: Reconductoring work along Gov. D. Mangubat Ave. in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

LAGUNA (STA. ROSA)
BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (FRI., 02/20/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 9:30PM AND 10:00PM (SAT., 02/21/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALIBAGO 64XV - BIÑAN 61BN
CIGI Compound in Bgy. Macabling, Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

REASON: Reconstruction of transmission lines at Bgy. San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2004
QUEZON CITY (NOVALICHES)
BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT NOVALICHES 43YJ
Along Susana St. from Quirino Highway to and including Gabriel Subd., Home Sweet Home Subd., Homeland Happy Homes, Villa Veronica Carmen Crest, Riveraville Subd., Chuidan Subd. and Rainbow Vill in Bgy. Sta. Lucia.

REASON: Replacement of rotten pole along Susana St. in Bgy. Sta. Lucia, Novaliches, Quezon City.

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Foes slam Palace choices

From page A1

sonal grudge against the two new election officials, but "if it were true that one of them was charged with election fraud, the President should explain why we are looking forward to clean elections?"

In the case of Barcelona, Roco said he was surprised why the President appointed a 68-year-old "who has never done any election law practice."

He likened the President's appointment to "freeing a crocodile in a poultry so all the chickens were eventually eaten."

Questionable background

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, a reelectionist under the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino led by actor Fernando Poe Jr., had earlier questioned the appointment of Barcelona and Garcillano because of their close ties to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Barcelona was reported to have contributed to the campaign kitty of Ms Macapagal when she ran for vice president in 1998. Garcillano had been accused by Pimentel of involvement in the "dagdagbawas" (vote padding and shaving) operation in Mindanao that deprived him of a seat in the Senate.

Garcillano denied he was involved in the anomalies when he was then regional Comelec head in Mindanao. The controversies, he said, stemmed from a request to purge the list of voters, which he turned down because it was not within the powers of the agency.

The other day presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye defended the appointment of the two commissioners, saying they were the "most fit" to fill the posts vacated by Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco and Ralph Lantion, who retired on Feb. 2.

No confirmation

In Kidapawan City, opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday said there was no way that Barcelona and Garcillano could undergo confirmation by the Commission on Appointments (CA) because Congress is in recess.

"There is no more time to have them undergo the confirmation of CA. It would be the 13th Congress that would have to confirm them or not," Lacson said.

He expressed optimism that the new commissioners would be independent in carrying out their duties despite being appointed by the President close to the May 10 elections and their affinity to Arroyo.

"Who are we to question the authority of the President? I'd like to believe the new commissioners would be impartial and would help give credibility to the elections," Lacson said.

Drilon vs Angara

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Edgardo Angara yesterday gave opposing views on the legality of the appointment of Barcelona and Garcillano.

Angara said Garcillano and Barcelona were designated in temporary capacity because their appointments were made when Congress was in recess and the CA could not convene to scrutinize their nominations.

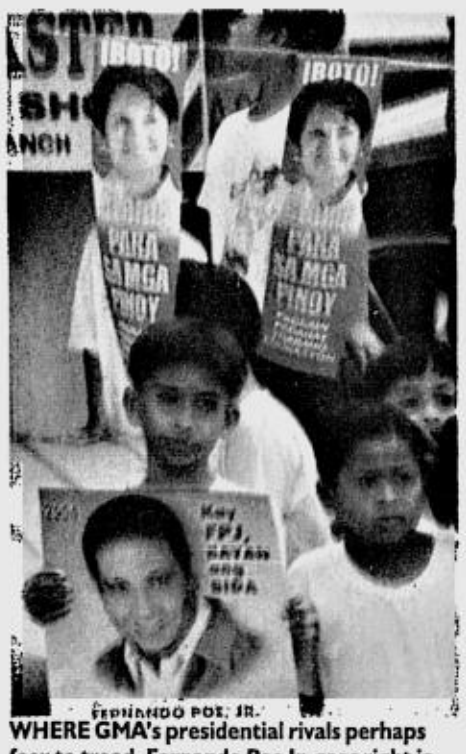
The opposition senator cited Section 1(2), Article IX of the Constitution, which says that no member of the Comelec shall be "appointed or designated in a temporary or acting capacity."

This was the basis of the Supreme Court decision in 1990 that declared unconstitutional the designation of Haydee Yorac by former President Corazon Aquino as acting chair of the elections agency, Angara said.

"We denounce this appointment of two additional Comelec commissioners 90 days before the elections," Angara told a news conference in the Senate.

Drilon, however, cited Section 16, Article VII of the Charter, which grants the President the authority to "appoint during the recess of Congress, whether voluntary or compulsory, but such appointments shall be effective only until disapproval by the CA or until the next adjournment of Congress."

He said this was shown in the Matibag vs Benipayo case in which the Supreme Court decided in 2002 that an ad interim appointment was a "permanent appointment." *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño*



FERNANDO POE JR.

WHERE GMA's presidential rivals perhaps fear to tread, Fernando Poe Jr. goes right in to campaign in the President's own hometown in Lubao, Pampanga. EDWIN BACASMAS

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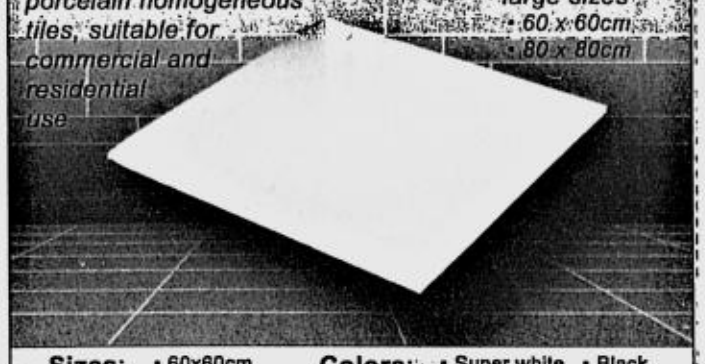

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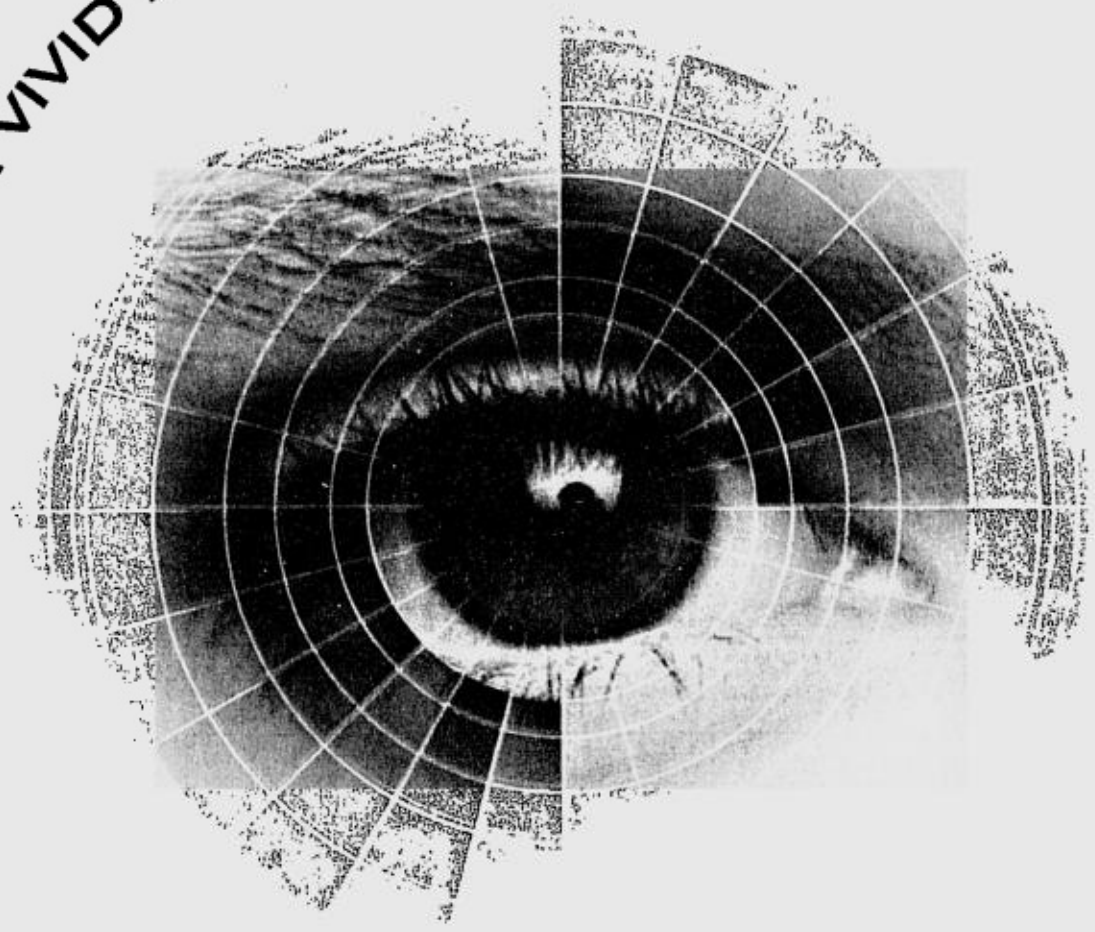

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HEARTBREAK hotel: A standoff with hotel management in Cagayan de Oro City on Wednesday bars Eddie Gil (with a female aide) from leaving his room until he paid his P35,000 hotel bill in cash. Earlier, he had issued a check that bounced. AFP

Bro. Eddie sees a 'born-again' RP

From page A1

"The nation is bound by the chains of poverty, corruption, violence, economic crisis. They think we can forget the problems of the country by entertainment in politics?" he said in an hourlong speech.

"[The] election is not a ritual, it is not a political circus. This election can make or break the future of the nation," he added.

Platform

Villanueva presented a 10-point "priority program for a righteous and productive government":

- National renewal program.
- Strengthening and rationalization of strategic growth centers, clusters and corridors.
- Mass mobilization of grass-roots entrepreneurship.
- Modernization of agriculture through improvement of farming technologies.
- Strengthening of cooperatives and entrepreneurial movements to complement agrarian reform.
- Reforms in the government through electronic transactions for transparent procurement, auditing, accounting and revenue-based budgeting system.
- Professionalization of the military, police and civil service with increasing compensation.
- Increase in the budget of the judiciary and establishment of special courts.
- Modernization of the equipment and weaponry of the military and police.
- Redirection of foreign service corps to protect individual interests of overseas Filipino workers.

Villanueva adopted a "non-traditional and strategic" campaign that would not require him to be on the road. He said he was operating on limited funds.

Donations

His candidacy, he said, was being financed by "voluntary donation of every Filipino who has a passion for change."

The pins, shirts, jackets and caps worn by his supporters, composed mostly of members of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide, were individual expenses, he said.

Villanueva is the founder and spiritual director of the JIL, which claims a membership of five million and has churches in 33 countries and territories all over the world.

"When I accepted the challenge, my only capital was faith in God and faith in Filipinos who love the Philippines ... I am not beholden to any political or business powers," he stressed.

"I do not accept money from drug lords, gambling lords and smuggling lords," he said.

The preacher said he decided to run for president because he was saddened by the deterioration of the country, which, he claimed, was once the richest in Asia.

He said the country was paying $350,000 every day for national debts, while $48 billion had been wasted because of corruption in the past 20 years.

Villanueva said he felt "holy indignation" when he saw the helplessness of abused OFWs next to their employers and the apathy of Philippine embassies abroad during his travels all over the world.

"The time has come for the Philippines to be lifted up. We will rise from the ashes. The world will again respect us," Villanueva said.

THE FLOCK at the Araneta Coliseum harkens to Jesus is Lord leader, Brother Eddie, who presents his 10-point priority programs anchored on a national renewal and grassroots entrepreneurship. AP

RP needs to change politics of personalities

From page A1

Magadia, however, acknowledged that it was difficult to project a socioeconomic scenario under a Poe administration.

Poe, a high school dropout who is leading in various surveys, has unsettled businessmen by failing to come up with a detailed program of government ahead of the election campaign that started on Feb. 10. The candidate's handlers, however, said Poe would unveil his economic team next week.

In an earlier television interview, Poe said he wanted Vice President Teofisto Guingona and opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III to be on his economic team. There were also reports that Roberto de Ocampo and Jose Pardo, who have both served as finance secretaries in previous administrations, would also be on the team.

GDP growth

At the same forum, former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito said the country's gross domestic product is projected to grow from 4.6 to 5.2 percent this year, slightly higher than the 4.5-percent growth in GDP last year.

Even so, Habito said the GDP growth projection was not something to crow about, considering that the country's neighbors are expected to post much higher growth. Thailand, for instance, has achieved a GDP growth of over 8 percent.

He said the next set of government leaders should be able to deal with the country's pressing economic problems, including high prices, the depreciation of the peso, rising unemployment and difficult access to credit due to a downgrade of the Philippines' credit standing.

To address the budget deficit and boost revenue, Habito said the next administration may have to rationalize the excise tax on so-called "sin products" and reorganize the Bureau of Internal Revenue. He also said the next administration should focus on tapping more export markets abroad and developing small and medium enterprises at home.

Root cause

Habito said the country's economic woes, ranging from the budget deficit to poverty and unemployment, may be traced to the nation's propensity in electing popular rather than capable candidates.

Both Habito and Magadia called for constitutional changes to bring about reforms in the political system.

"Unfortunately, the reality is that everything boils down to choice among personalities," Habito said at the forum.

He said there was need to change the political system in which the voters are easily swayed by popular personalities instead of intelligent platforms.

Magadia said amending the Constitution was necessary in building investor confidence in government leaders and institutions.

He noted the lack of concrete platforms among presidential candidates. "It is noticeable that no detailed and comprehensive action plans have really been taken by the presidential candidates. What they usually present are motherhood statements and generic principles," he said in his presentation.

Because candidates do not offer any concrete agenda to develop the economy, the voting public is left to judge them on their character and the company they keep, Magadia said.

CONTROVERSIAL apppointees to the Comelec, Manuel Barcelona (left) and Virgilio Garcillano, are welcomed by its chair, Benjamin Abalos. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

2 GIs killed in latest Iraq violence

BAGHDAD—A roadside bomb killed two US soldiers in Baghdad, the US military said on Thursday, as Iraqis began burying dozens of victims of two attacks against locals working with the US-led occupation.

The US Army's 1st Armored Division said the bomb exploded at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday as the soldiers were passing by in their vehicles.

The casualties were evacuated to a combat support hospital for treatment where two soldiers later died, it said in a statement.

The attack on the US patrol came hours after a suicide car bomb killed 47 people at an army recruitment center in the capital. A similar attack on a police station south of Baghdad killed 53 people on Tuesday.

Only a few of the bodies from Wednesday's blast had been taken for burial. Doctors said some corpses were difficult to identify due to mutilation or bad burns.

The police and new army are central to Washington's plan to hand over power to Iraqis by June 30. Most of Wednesday's victims were newly recruited soldiers reporting for duty.

The attacks follow a pattern of targeting Iraqis seen as collaborating with the US occupation. Twin suicide bombings in northern Iraq against two Kurdish parties allied with the United States killed more than 100 people on Feb. 1.

At least 372 American soldiers have been killed in combat since US-led forces invaded Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein last March.

The violence rages as a UN team, led by veteran diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, is in the country discussing the possibility of holding elections ahead of the June 30 handover deadline, as demanded by leaders of the Shiite Muslim majority. US plans are for elections only later.

Brahimi is due to leave by Friday at the latest, a senior US-led administration official said. The rest of the UN team has started touring provinces. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is expected to make a decision on the elections on Feb. 21.

Two bomb attacks against the UN presence in Baghdad last year killed dozens and forced the UN to pull out of Iraq.

A small explosion on Thursday blew a small hole in a road and smashed windows in a residential area of Samawa in southern Iraq near where Japanese troops are stationed, but there were no reports of injuries, police said.

There is much concern in Japan about the safety of Japanese military personnel who are being sent to help rebuild Iraq in Japan's riskiest military mission since World War Two.

In the southern city of Diwaniyah on Wednesday, five Spanish soldiers on patrol were wounded when an explosive device was thrown at them, Spain's defense ministry said. *Reuters*

Asian-Americans to make known national agenda

SAN FRANCISCO—Tired of being overlooked by politicians, a coalition of Asian-American groups says it wants the presidential candidates to highlight anti-poverty programs, immigration reform and anti-discrimination efforts in their campaigns.

Seventeen organizations worked for a year to produce a 70-page platform, being released Thursday (Friday in Manila) at a news conference in Washington. They say President George W. Bush and the Democratic presidential nominee should take notice of the document to win the potentially crucial Asian-American vote.

"This is really the first time we've come together and said we're going to make it clear that all of our communities are standing behind these issues," said Karen Narasaki, president of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, a coalition member. "We felt that none of the candidates were really paying attention to our community."

Though Asians are a small percentage of the overall population—about 4 percent—they are concentrated in key electoral states such as California, Narasaki said.

The coalition's agenda calls for policies that help Asians overcome poverty, find affordable housing and get a good education and access to health care—issues important to most Americans.

The platform also strives to shatter the stereotype of Asians as "model minorities" with above average incomes, education and few serious problems.

The report notes the poverty rate in 2000 for Hmong people was 38 percent; 29 percent for Cambodians; 19 percent for Laotians and 16 percent for Vietnamese.

Other priorities include protecting affirmative action and the right to vote and fighting hate crimes and racial profiling.

"In the area of civil rights, a lot of Americans tend to think that Asian-Americans are doing well," Narasaki said. They "don't understand that our community does face discrimination in many different forms." *AP*

Kerry victories force Clark to opt out of race

WASHINGTON—Former Nato commander Wesley Clark dropped out of the presidential race Wednesday in the wake of front-runner Sen. John Kerry's two latest victories and amid mounting questions about President George W. Bush's military service.

Clark scored disappointing third-place finishes in Tennessee and Virginia on Tuesday, trailing Kerry and Senator John Edwards.

The retired general returned to his hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas, to formally drop out of the race, and took a farewell swipe at Bush's "fatally flawed" foreign policy, slamming the US-led invasion as "a war we didn't have to fight."

Bush also faced growing questions about his Vietnam war-era military service, one day after the White House released payroll and service documents on Bush from the murky period in 1972-73.

Bush, 57, avoided combat in Vietnam by enlisting in 1968 as a fighter pilot trainee in the Texas Air National Guard.

The chair of the Democratic Party Terry McAuliffe said the White House move to release documents on Bush's military service "creates more questions than answers."

"The fact remains that there is still no evidence that George W. Bush showed up for duty as ordered while in Alabama," McAuliffe said.

McAuliffe forced Bush's military record back into the election campaign spotlight last week by saying the president had been "Awol"—absent without leave—while serving in the National Guard in the United States.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan again condemned critics, saying: "What you are seeing is gutter politics."

"The American people deserve better. There are some who are not interested in their facts. They are simply trolling for trash."

With the much-decorated Kerry winning heavy popularity in the Democratic presidential nominating race on the strength of his Vietnam war record, leading newspapers also said the White House's release of documents was unlikely to end the controversy. *AFP*

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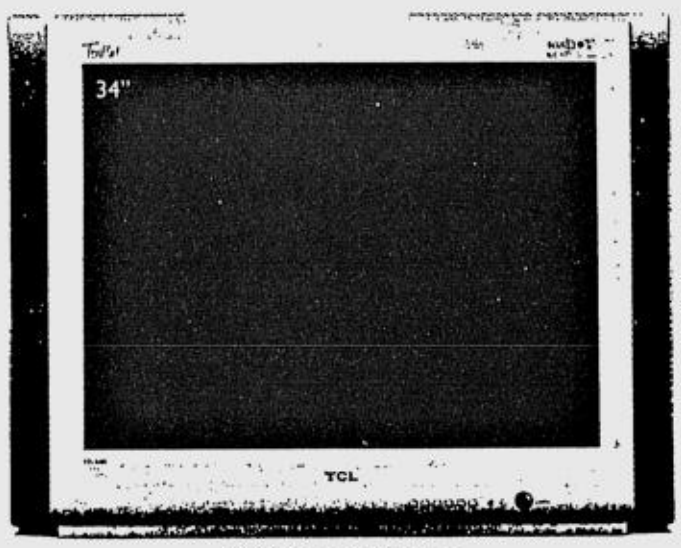

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Pakistan says nuclear scientists leaked array of sensitive items

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan has defended the detention of six nuclear scientists and officials and blamed them for leaking a vast array of sensitive items including secret codes to foreign governments.

Interior ministry statements submitted in court proceedings and seen by AFP said the six had over many years "been engaged in nuclear proliferation" and their detention was necessary to ensure the leaks stopped.

The statements were submitted to the Lahore High Court to counter petitions filed by the families of the six calling the detentions illegal and demanding their release.

The six were detained as part of an investigation into the leaking of secrets to Libya, North Korea and Iran by a nuclear smuggling ring linked to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program.

Khan, considered a national hero, last week publicly admitted his role in the black market operation and asked for forgiveness. He was pardoned by President Pervez Musharraf.

The statements said the six scientists and officials were responsible for "directly or indirectly passing onto foreign countries and individuals secret codes, nuclear materials, substances, machinery, equipment, components, information, documents, sketches, plans, models, articles and notes etc."

The detained have been identified as scientists Mohammad Farooq, Nazir Ahmed and Neseemuddin as well as retired military officers Islam ul-Haq, Sajawal Khan Malik and Iqbal Tajwar.

All were employees of Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), the main Pakistani nuclear research center run by A.Q. Khan.

The statements said the proliferation activities had "seriously prejudiced the defense, external affairs and security of Pakistan" but that it was not in the public interest to disclose more details about their activities.

"Disclosure in respect of these will have very serious consequences for the defence, security and external relations of Pakistan."

The government said that "due to serious concerns for the security" of the detainees, who are being held under the Security of Pakistan Act of 1952, it could not produce them in court.

Pakistan launched an investigation of its nuclear scientists and officials in November after it received a letter from International Atomic Energy Agency about leaks of information to other countries.

In an 11-page report detailing the leaks which took place between 1986 and 1993, Khan said he was involved in giving nuclear information for groups working for Iran, Libya and North Korea. *AFP*

A MASKED militant with the Al Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic J while Israeli forces open fire during the Incursion incursion into Gaza city, Feb. 1

WHO confirms no human passed bird flu virus

WASHINGTON—Genetic tests showed no evidence a deadly bird flu that has killed 19 people in Asia was passing from person to person, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

It said DNA tests on a 23-year-old Vietnamese woman who died of the H5N1 poultry influenza virus showed no evidence she caught it from another person.

Her 30-year-old sister also died of bird flu and their brother succumbed to a respiratory illness though he could not be tested for the virus because his body was cremated.

The WHO originally reported the results last week but then recalled them, saying they had in fact tested a different woman.

"WHO has today received the results from a study of virus isolated from a 23-year-old woman who is part of a family cluster in Vietnam under investigation as the first possible instance of human-to-human transmission," the UN health agency said in a statement posted on its Web site at http://www/who.int.

"Virus genetic material from this woman, as for the other case in this cluster, is of avian origin and contains no human influenza genes." At least 14 people in Vietnam have died of the bird flu. Five have died in Thailand.

Late on Wednesday, the Ho Chi Minh City health department said a 22-year-old man from the southern city tested positive for the bird flu virus on Feb. 10. He was being treated at a city hospital.

Experts say the bird flu virus must mutate before it can be passed easily from person to person, although people can clearly catch it from birds.

But recent studies on the virus that caused the 1918 influenza pandemic, which killed 40 million people globally, showed it had mutated very little from its original form in birds. This suggests few changes are needed to make any bird influenza virus into one that is easily passed between humans. *Reuters*

3 more killed in Haiti unrest; UN to send team

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
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Pakistan says nuclear scientists leaked array of sensitive items

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan has defended the detention of six nuclear scientists and officials and blamed them for leaking a vast array of sensitive items including secret codes to foreign governments.

Interior ministry statements submitted in court proceedings and seen by AFP said the six had over many years "been engaged in nuclear proliferation" and their detention was necessary to ensure the leaks stopped.

The statements were submitted to the Lahore High Court to counter petitions filed by the families of the six calling the detentions illegal and demanding their release.

The six were detained as part of an investigation into the leaking of secrets to Libya, North Korea and Iran by a nuclear smuggling ring linked to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program.

Khan, considered a national hero, last week publicly admitted his role in the black market operation and asked for forgiveness. He was pardoned by President Pervez Musharraf.

The statements said the six scientists and officials were responsible for "directly or indirectly passing onto foreign countries and individuals secret codes, nuclear materials, substances, machinery, equipment, components, information, documents, sketches, plans, models, articles and notes etc."

The detained have been identified as scientists Mohammad Farooq, Nazir Ahmed and Neseemuddin as well as retired military officers Islam ui-Haq, Sajawal Khan Malik and Iqbal Tajwar.

All were employees of Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), the main Pakistani nuclear research center run by A.Q. Khan.

The statements said the proliferation activities had "seriously prejudiced the defense, external affairs and security of Pakistan" but that it was not in the public interest to disclose more details about their activities.

"Disclosure in respect of these will have very serious consequences for the defence, security and external relations of Pakistan."

The government said that "due to serious concerns for the security" of the detainees, who are being held under the Security of Pakistan Act of 1952, it could not produce them in court.

Pakistan launched an investigation of its nuclear scientists and officials in November after it received a letter from International Atomic Energy Agency about leaks of information to other countries.

In an 11-page report detailing the leaks which took place between 1986 and 1993, Khan said he was involved in giving nuclear information for groups working for Iran, Libya and North Korea. *AFP*

A MASKED militant with the Al Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic J while Israeli forces open fire during the Incursion incursion into Gaza city, Feb. 1

WHO confirms no human passed bird flu virus

WASHINGTON—Genetic tests showed no evidence a deadly bird flu that has killed 19 people in Asia was passing from person to person, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

It said DNA tests on a 23-year-old Vietnamese woman who died of the H5N1 poultry influenza virus showed no evidence she caught it from another person.

Her 30-year-old sister also died of bird flu and their brother succumbed to a respiratory illness though he could not be tested for the virus because his body was cremated.

The WHO originally reported the results last week but then recalled them, saying they had in fact tested a different woman.

"WHO has today received the results from a study of virus isolated from a 23-year-old woman who is part of a family cluster in Vietnam under investigation as the first possible instance of human-to-human transmission," the UN health agency said in a statement posted on its Web site at http://www/who.int.

"Virus genetic material from this woman, as for the other case in this cluster, is of avian origin and contains no human influenza genes." At least 14 people in Vietnam have died of the bird flu. Five have died in Thailand.

Late on Wednesday, the Ho Chi Minh City health department said a 22-year-old man from the southern city tested positive for the bird flu virus on Feb. 10. He was being treated at a city hospital.

Experts say the bird flu virus must mutate before it can be passed easily from person to person, although people can clearly catch it from birds.

But recent studies on the virus that caused the 1918 influenza pandemic, which killed 40 million people globally, showed it had mutated very little from its original form in birds. This suggests few changes are needed to make any bird influenza virus into one that is easily passed between humans. *Reuters*

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Israelis kill 15 Palestinians

GAZA—In their deadliest strike for months, Israeli troops killed at least 15 Palestinians in gun battles in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday during raids Israel said were to root out militants attacking Jewish settlements.

The army assault followed signs of unease in the military over a shock announcement by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon last week that he planned to pull all settlers out of the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian witnesses said soldiers backed by tanks moved near dawn into Shijaia, a militant stronghold in densely packed Gaza City, opening fire and drawing a response from masked gunmen using assault rifles and anti-tank rockets.

Medics said 12 Palestinians, including at least six gunmen and one policeman, were killed. Another three were shot dead in another raid on the southern Gaza refugee camp of Rafah, where the army said it hit four gunmen. Scores were wounded.

Among the dead were Hani Abu Skhaila, a senior activist of the Hamas faction, at the forefront of suicide bombings during three years of conflict, and the 17-year-old son of Ahmed Helles, a leader of President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

The violence dealt a fresh blow to hopes of reviving talks on a US-backed peace plan and Hamas and Fatah-linked militants urged major revenge attacks on Israel.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qrie called the raid a crime and, speaking during a visit to Rome, said it would "badly affect" talks due on Sunday to prepare his first meeting with Sharon—a summit for which no date has yet been fixed.

However, Qurie said: "there will be a meeting" despite militants' calls for the Palestinian Authority to scrap summit plans to discuss the stalled US-backed peace "road map."

Israel's army said Palestinian "terror cells" had attacked with anti-tank missiles, bombs and gunfire. It said its operation aimed to thwart mortar and rocket attacks on Israelis.

"I am 100 percent sure that nobody who was not armed was hit," army Colonel Yoel Strick said. "There has been an escalation in the past two weeks and we achieved our purpose."

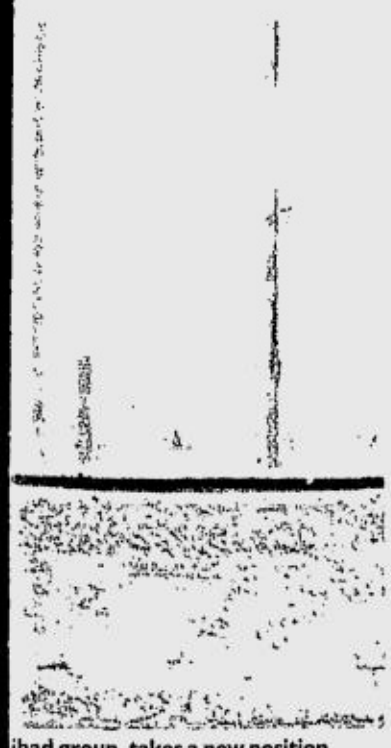
Thousands of chanting mourners, firing occasional shots, surged through Gaza, bearing the dead through the waving flags of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah.

"Sharon, prepare body bags," shouted one activist through a loudspeaker. "Sooner or later your bodies will be collected off the streets, in markets and in restaurants."

Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed group of Fatah, vowed in a statement to carry out an "earthquake-like response in the depths of the Zionist entity."

Militants launched at least eight homemade Qassam rockets, of which four hit Israeli territory near the Gaza Strip, but caused no casualties or damage, an army spokesperson said.

Palestinian witnesses said that an explosion in a house in Gaza's Khan Younis refugee camp injured two men, one from Fatah and one from Hamas, who were apparently making explosives. *Reuters*



ihad group, takes a new position
l. AP

CANDLE FOR THE SICK
Pope John Paul II sits beside a candle during a special audience the Pontiff granted to sick people on the occasion of the "Day of the Sick" inside the Paul VI hall at the Vatican, Feb. 11. AP

Comcast makes surprise $50-B bid for Disney

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK—Cable operator Comcast Corp. on Wednesday launched a surprise bid to buy Walt Disney Co. for about $50 billion in stock, a deal that would create the world's largest media company and further threatens embattled Disney Chief Executive Michael Eisner.

EISNER

Comcast Chief Executive Brian Roberts said he made the unsolicited all-stock offer public after Eisner personally turned it down on Monday. Eisner was already under fire from Disney founding-family shareholders bent on ousting him.

The proposed deal could redraw the US media landscape, inviting comparisons with the merger of America Online and Time Warner that closed in 2001, which was initially much heralded but dismally failed to meet expectations.

The Disney board met on Wednesday and asked bank advisers to analyze the offer, which would join the No. 1 US cable operator with Hollywood's top film studio, broadcaster ABC, sports channel ESPN, worldwide theme parks and a stable of animated characters from Mickey Mouse to the Lion King.

Disney and Comcast would follow in the footsteps of Time Warner and News Corp.

NCBAX, both merger-forged media conglomerates that also combine programming and TV distribution. But a Disney-Comcast combination would overpower its two rivals by revenue.

Investors bid up Disney shares as much as 16 percent, while Comcast shares fell as much as 9 percent, as investors bet that the Comcast offer would be raised or topped by a rival.

"The price is too low," said Mel Tukman of Tukman Capital Management, which manages 15 million shares of Disney. "(Disney executives) are managing to improve fundamentals on almost every front while this is happening." *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Air France-KLM merger

WASHINGTON—US regulators Wednesday approved the merger of Air France and Dutch carrier KLM, shortly after the EU cleared an antitrust review, lifting the last obstacles to the creation of one of the world's biggest airlines. "We closed our investigation." US Department of Justice spokesperson Gina Talamona said. "We took no enforcement action." The move clears the Air France-KLM tie-up, which will be the world's largest airline in revenue terms. In terms of passenger-miles, it will rank third behind AMR Corp's American Airlines and UAL Corp's United Airlines. And in terms of the number of passengers flown, it will be fourth, behind American, Delta and United, according to the International Air Transport Association. *AFP*

Jackson breast fallout

WASHINGTON—The head of the US government media watchdog on Wednesday hit out at broadcasting companies for risky displays such as singer Janet Jackson's breast stunt as he sought tougher punishment for breaches of decency regulations. Federal Communications Commission chair Michael Powell wants a tenfold increase in the current $27,500-fine which he called "peanuts" to the broadcasting giants and two senators introduced legislation to allow the increase. A hearing of the Senate commerce, science and transportation committee heard widespread calls for exemplary action for the showing of Justin Timberlake ripping off Jackson's bodice at the Super Bowl on Feb. 1. "The now infamous display during the Super Bowl halftime show, which represented a new low in prime time television, is just the latest example in a growing list of deplorable incidents over the nation's airwaves," Powell said. *AFP*

NY police sued

NEW YORK—Civil rights lawyers on Wednesday sued the New York Police Department on behalf of 52 people arrested at an anti-war protest, the latest in a series of lawsuits nationwide challenging police conduct at rallies opposing the US-led war on Iraq. The lawsuit filed in Manhattan federal court charged the NYPD "unlawfully arrested peaceful protesters and detained them for excessively long periods" after the April 7, 2003, rally outside an investment bank they accused of war profiteering. *Reuters*

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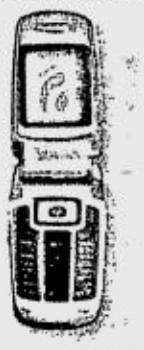

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Partisan choices

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo apparently is not leaving anything to chance. In her eagerness to secure a full six-year presidential term of her own, the President has appointed two commissioners of the Commission on Elections who are perceived to be partisans to her cause: Manuel Barcelona Jr. and Virgilio Garcillano.

According to a report by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Barcelona and his son, Manuel Barcelona III, contributed P500,000 and P100,000, respectively, to Ms Macapagal's 1998 campaign for the vice-presidency.

Garcillano did not contribute to Ms Macapagal's 1998 campaign. But he was the Comelec regional director for Northern Mindanao when "*dagdag-bawas*," the infamous vote padding and shaving of votes in the 1995 elections, took place.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., one of the victims of the vote-rigging, swears that Garcillano had a hand—or at least was complicit—in the fraud. Although Garcillano was never indicted for it, it is noteworthy that the Macapagal administration, for all its much-vaunted talent search, does not seem worried about resurrecting from the tomb of ignominy a man whose reputation is sullied or, at the least, controversial.

Worse, the administration seems to be doing the bidding of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, also its appointee, who has pulled Garcillano out of retirement to make him his consultant for Mindanao. To be consulted for what? For vote-rigging and -shaving?

Since Mindanao promises to be an electoral battleground, the lynchpin no less of what is expected to be a close presidential race, the appointment of somebody tainted by allegations of vote-rigging in the past is alarming. Certainly Malacañang should have exercised more circumspection and discernment over the appointment.

That Malacañang has apparently adopted the recommendation of Abalos, who has botched the computerization project and has sent the credibility rating of the Comelec plunging in an important election season, shows the quality of its talent search, indeed.

The quality of that search is characterized by nepotism and cronyism. Now although it may be said that the appointment of close associates of the seating power to important offices is part and parcel of any government, it is worrisome that the President seems to have done par for the course with her appointments to the Supreme Court and constitutional commissions.

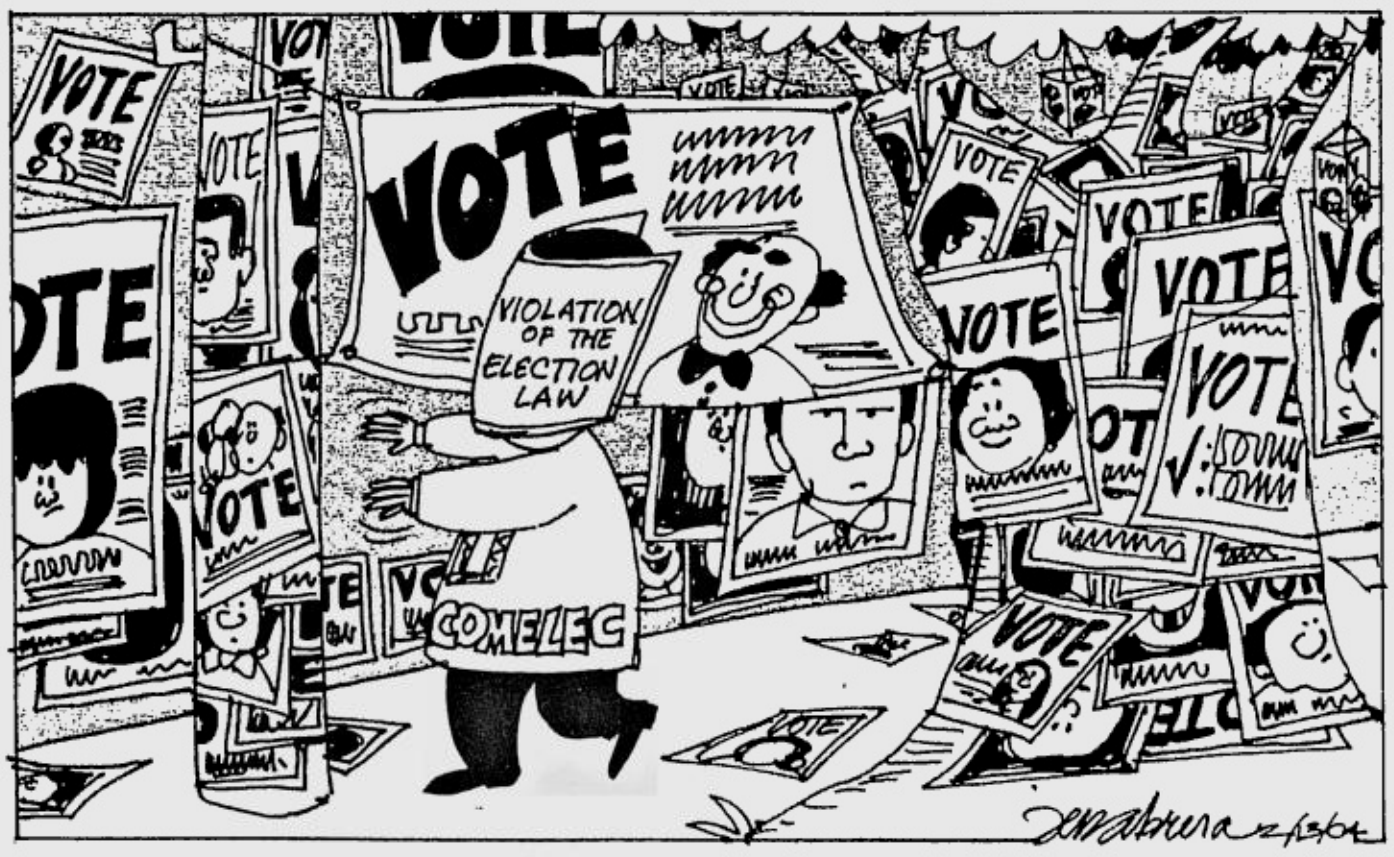
Look at her appointments to the Supreme Court. Many of her appointees come from the Carpio Villaraza and Cruz law office, which appears to wield a strong influence in her government. Incidentally, senior partners of the firm were heavy contributors to her 1998 campaign: F. Arthur Villaraza and Avelino J. Cruz Jr. gave P5 million each; Raoul Angangco, P750,000; and Simeon V. Marcelo, P750,000.

Marcelo shares with Barcelona the luck of having been appointed to a constitutional body after contributing to the vice-presidential campaign of Ms Macapagal: he was appointed ombudsman, in charge of prosecuting graft and corruption cases.

What sort of picture are we having here? The President at the least seems remarkably transparent about her bias to put her own champions and supporters in government. There's nothing essentially wrong here when we are talking about executive and legislative offices, which are inherently political. But when we are talking about judicial and constitutional bodies, partisan appointments are dangerous.

They are dangerous because they compromise the independence and integrity of the offices vested by the Constitution with the power to decide constitutional issues. They gnaw at the credibility and authority of such institutions, thus undermining people's faith in democracy. With the constitutional offices subverted, democracy becomes a tinderbox, a potential conflagration.

The President should have followed after the shining legacy of her father. Although a tireless campaigner like her, Diosdado Macapagal never tried to undermine the independence and integrity of constitutional bodies by blatantly partisan choices. He was a democrat who respected the Constitution and did not tinker with it to improve his advantage. Alas, it seems daddy's girl is of a completely different order.



IT experts fear cheating in manual count

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE NATIONAL candidates are off and running, but will the votes for them be counted correctly and honestly? It is almost a mathematical formula that the longer the counting of votes takes, the bigger the chances of cheating. And like its red tape, the Philippines holds the world record as the slowest in the counting of votes.

It was hoped that the electronic age may have already caught up with our antiquated electoral counting and assure honesty with the automated counting machines. But it was not to be. The Supreme Court pulled us back to the Stone Age with a controversial decision nullifying a contract that would modernize our electoral system and count the votes faster. Now we are back to the slow, tedious, unreliable and highly suspect manual counting. And that is what is now worrying political watchers. The count may not reflect the true wishes of the people and real winners may eventually come out as losers.

The Supreme Court will decide in a few days the motion for reconsideration filed by the Comelec and MegaPacific, supplier of the counting machines. It is not likely that the tribunal will change its mind, and even if it does, there is hardly any time left to switch again to automated counting. But experts in information technology are still hopeful that the high court would change its mind. Officers of the Philippine Computer Society (PCS) said that the Supreme Court must allow a partial automation of the elections. The PCS said that automated elections are still possible if the high court would allow it.

PCS president Ma. Elena Van Tooren, a member of the IT team tapped by the Comelec to help it implement the P1.3-billion project, said that the system developed to run the automated counting and canvassing of votes was working well, and that the software running it was ready. She thinks some people feared that poll automation would deprive some parties of ways to cheat under a manual system because automation is fool-proof and the only way to stop it is to kill the project. Partial automation in Metro Manila or in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, she added, would prove to be a "win-win" situation.

Antonio Tinsay, president of PCNetwork Inc. and a technical adviser to the Comelec, said that partial implementation of the automation project would allow the Comelec to gain experience before full implementation in 2007. It would also ensure that the equipment would not go to waste. He revealed that aside from the 1,900 counting machines, the Comelec bought 2,500 IBM desktop computers, 2,500 printers, and 600 stand-by generators. All those investments will go down the drain now. The ultimate losers are the taxpayers.

Jose Tolentino, Comelec director for administrative services and director in charge of the automated system, said that the poll body would likely "salvage" some of the equipment bought for automation. "The Comelec is trying to salvage some of the resources bought, particularly the paper that was to be used as ballots for the machines," he said. The special paper may still be used as ballots for the manual elections, but they would be very expensive ballots.

Fortunato dela Peña, undersecretary for information and technology of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), said that a lot of time and resources have been invested in the project. The DOST has been helping the Comelec test more than 1,900 counting machines that were to be used in the May elections. After the high court's decision, the DOST stopped all testing.

Dela Peña also clarified reports that the machines that had been delivered were not working properly. Based on the DOST testing of 1,991 counting machines, only two have so far failed, he said.

Other technical advisers to the project said "the Filipino people will now be forced to entrust their votes to a manual system of counting and canvassing that had been shown in the past to be prone to massive fraud." The Supreme Court decision "threw the voice of the people to the mercy of those who have it in their power to manipulate the results of elections, thereby undermining the democratic process it claims to protect."

* * *

What the Comelec needs now very badly is the trust and confidence of the people. The two commissioners appointed recently to fill the vacancies erode further what little trust and confidence are left because of their backgrounds. One is a big contributor to President Macapagal-Arroyo's poll campaigns. How can you trust a man like that to rule on the conduct of the campaign and elections where GMA is a candidate?

Not only will the public suspect every move and decision that the Comelec makes, it would also be unfair to the two new appointees. No matter how learned and fair their decisions, they would always be suspect and unacceptable to the people. So with the candidates their decisions would favor. Remember that elections in the Philippines are always fought bitterly, and few losers accept defeat gracefully. In fairness to them and to save them from future controversies, the President should change them. Now.

If the President can't find good replacements, there is Romulo Macalintal, a respected election lawyer who has been giving learned opinions on election laws that even the commissioners themselves overlook. He would be a good and acceptable choice.

Leaders

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I CAUGHT an interesting advertisement on ABS-CBN, flashed during a break in the news. It was praising Mahathir Mohamad, Lee Kuan Yew and Thaksin Shinawatra for what they did for their countries. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are currently three of the most economically progressive countries of Asia.

They're all in Southeast Asia not quite incidentally, which leaves only Indonesia, the Indochinese countries, and the Philippines among the non-progressive ones. Vietnam is threatening to catch up with them, and Indonesia, for all its occasional food riots, is still fairly better off than us. That puts us at the lowest rungs of the ladder, along with Cambodia and Laos. And the way things are going, they'll probably have us biting their dust, too soon.

The ad ends by saying "Vote wisely." It is a call for the voters to vote for someone who has the virtues or qualities of Mahathir, Lee or Thaksin.

I don't know what subliminal messages, if any, the ad means to beam. My first impression was that it is a subtle dig at FPJ or at entertainers in general who cannot be presumed to be in the same league with Mahathir et al. But I wondered why ABS-CBN would do that, having two of its protégés contesting the vice-presidency. Unless it is saying that Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda are not in the same league with FPJ.

But for all that, the ad is a salutary one, and if heeded by the voters (as it should), it can help restore sanity in elections. But if heeded by the voters, it also cannot possibly benefit GMA quite apart from FPJ.

What do Mahathir, Lee and Thaksin have in common? Well, what they do not have in common is that they are all heads of authoritarian regimes. I am glad ABS-CBN included Thaksin among them, or their ad may look like a tacit endorsement of authoritarian regimes. Both Mahathir and Lee are (retired) heads of such regimes, their longevity owing also to their jailing or hounding their rivals to exile or to the grave. Anwar Ibrahim remains in jail on trumped-up charges of sexual indiscretion, a blot on Mahathir's arguably sterling record of leading his country to tiger- or dragon-hood.

But Thaksin is the head of a democratic country. Not as "rambunctiously" democratic as ours, to use a word favored by Lee, but democratic nonetheless. That should dispel at once the notion that the (Southeast) Asian path to progress is littered with sandbags and barbed wire. Or that one of the qualities required of a good (Southeast) Asian leader is a predisposition toward iron-fisted rule.

What Mahathir, Lee and Thaksin do have in common is a tremendous sense of pride and independence. Mahathir in particular shot to international prominence recently by vigorously leading the Non-Aligned Movement, composed of more than a hundred nations, into opposing George W. Bush's "war against terror." His fulmination at the American invasion of Iraq during the last UN ministerial meeting was widely quoted by the world press. GMA's defense of it in the same forum was widely quoted only by Ignacio Bunye.

Lee and Thaksin have taken quite different tacks—Lee favors the American position, Thaksin is neutral—but both have done so from having better things to do than follow an American idiot's lead. All three believe in the capabilities of their people. You will not find them saying another country knows what's best for them or they need the help of another country to survive.

Yet another thing they have in common is a vision or dream of what their country can be. A vision or dream they pursue even if it proves arduous or demands tough decisions. They are, in a word, not populist leaders who will do only what is easy or gets them reelected. They are not there to please. You may quarrel with Lee's and Mahathir's excesses—there is still a clear line between resolute and tyrannical, decisive and coercive—but you've got to admire their spirit or character.

Those are the very things FPJ and GMA lack. As independence goes, what FPJ has of it is writ largely on celluloid. How can you expect independence from someone who, like Erap, is bound to require an adviser for everything from social justice to social etiquette? It's hard to stay on course if you don't know where you're going.

And who is the President who said we needed American troops in this country because we are powerless to rid the world of a small Moro kidnap gang preying on foreigners? I did ask last year why we did not just ask the Americans for help to run our finances, to maintain peace and order, to breathe. I couldn't understand why we bothered to fly a flag. The best exponent of Philippine aspirations had become that group calling for this country to revert to Commonwealth status. No one has reduced this country to an utter state of mendicancy, Claro M. Recto's favorite description of the Filipino's servile mentality, more than GMA. Not even Diosdado Macapagal.

Just as well, if having a vision is the common trait among Mahathir, Lee and Thaksin, not having one is the common trait among Erap, FPJ and GMA. The last three are populist leaders, who follow the line of least resistance, or what is popular. Erap and FPJ come from the movies, their whole mindset is to "give the public what it wants." The *takilya*—not FPJ—is king. GMA is not from the movies, though she desperately longs to be so, but giving the public what it wants is what she too has done in three and half years of gratuitous rule. Turning Malacañang into Presinto Uno, taking up the American cause, stoking this country's anti-Moro bias—these are populist moves meant to score points with the voters. Yes, the voters: She has been campaigning well ahead of everybody else. Three years ahead, in fact.

Do vote for a true leader. Not for an entertainer, or a fake one.

'Burlesque' program of government

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IN AN ATTEMPT to seize the initiative from President Macapagal-Arroyo and be taken seriously, presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. on Monday unveiled what was billed as an economic program. The program, pompously called a "social covenant" with the Filipino people, turned out to be a package of platitudes. It is a caricature of a platform. If the opposition thinks that with its program, its candidate will acquire *gravitas*, it is wasting its time, as well as the voters'.

As a main contender for political power, the opposition coalition that has embraced Poe as its alternative to Ms Macapagal had better stick to what it does best—staging a political burlesque, which is what it did at the launching of its campaign at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City. The extravaganza of entertainers and "sexy" movie stars proved to be a spectacular success in unveiling human bodies rather than in spelling out economic plans.

The Pasay road show defined the style of the Poe campaign and told us what to expect from him in the next four months. If I have been pressing opponents of the sitting president to put forward concrete economic proposals, it is because the Filipino people deserve a break from months of being regaled by road shows and trivial concerns that are irrelevant to their lives. It is not being repetitious to insist that those who seek to dismount the administration have a duty to offer something superior than what they seek to replace.

Since the official start of the campaign last Monday, the incumbent has been hammered on the anvil for a number of issues, but I have not heard from any one of her rivals'—among them, Poe, Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson—programs that are different from those already put in place by the administration or that promise to deliver better results than the existing ones.

The opposition's "covenant" is merely a striptease of proposals presented in the burlesque mood that characterizes the movie-style campaign of the Poe camp. The so-called program is nothing more than a catalogue of pious intentions. Nothing can be emptier than a "covenant" said to be anchored on "trust and confidence." This program does not tell us how intentions can be implemented. The program is a description of the problems of the country; a description is no program at all.

Poe outlined intentions which his spin doctors packaged as a "platform." It seeks, among others, to:

Restore public trust and confidence in government by depoliticizing top level appointments in the executive, judiciary and military, by conducting an "in-depth review" of proposals to shift to the parliamentary system, by ensuring "total transparency" in public transactions. It seeks to "provide the minimum basic needs of every Filipino, plow money into rural infrastructure and expand health insurance coverage to 90 percent of Filipinos, but it does not say how the money will be raised beyond printing paper money—a possibility that can happen only in film-making.

On the deficit, the platform calls for drastic cost-cutting of non-essential expenditures and for "carrying out bold tax reforms to improve revenue collections." There is absolutely nothing that is fresh in this platform or that has not been described by the programs of this government, let alone previous governments. All what this platform did was to repackage old measures, and stamp his name on it and call it a "program."

His statement that "poverty is the biggest scandal in the country" is not a new discovery, but it was passed off as a profound discovery. Reducing this problem in just three words for sound byte, Poe said the biggest problem facing Filipinos every day was "breakfast, lunch and dinner." Going by his extravagant promises, this man reveals himself as someone in trance. How he will provide three meals to the poor, we are not told.

The platform is a mishmash of proposals derived from consultations with advisers who are reported to have been asked to form his economic team. A collection of economic advisers with clashing ideological tendencies could make a confusing mix of economic prescriptions. The name of Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Sen. Sergio Osmeña Jr. have been mentioned as possible members. No people can be more incompatible in economic approaches than Guingona and Osmeña—the former with his anachronistic economic nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s; and the latter, whose economic orientation (relative to globalization and free trade) is hard to define.

From the contents of his "platform," Poe is already trapped in a mix-up of economic formulae. Former Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao, of President Aquino's Cabinet, has seen the pitfall of joining a Poe team. Estanislao has denied reports he had agreed to be one of Poe's advisers. He said he begged off when he was approached. He said he would advice a presidential candidate if there was a "genuine interest" in his insights, implying that his time might be wasted on someone who can't understand economic advice. Estanislao said, "In the case of (Poe), I was certain that other economic advisers may already be available and I did not want to confuse the candidate with one more economic advice from one more economic adviser."

Ms Macapagal need not waste time answering Poe's "platform." It's enough she explains her own programs. Let Poe boil in his own stew and ignorance. It is foolish for her, Roco or Lacson to compete with Poe in the stardust road show. They can't beat him in this game. They should not allow Poe to set the agenda of the campaign. From the looks of it, this campaign will not be joined on economic issues. It will be fought on the burlesque stage.

More questions

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HERE are the rest of the "20 Questions" formulated by pagbabago@pilipinas, but offered to all voters and candidates, in what the group hopes will be at least a step toward more rational and meaningful elections, from both the candidates' and voters' perspectives.

Though the questions were listed only after lengthy and complex discussion by pagbabago members, the group emphasizes that those who choose to use them are free to add, subtract, or modify them as they please. Already, many citizens' organizations have expressed interest in employing the "20 Questions" in their assemblies and using the candidates' replies to guide them in their choices. Leaders of pagbabago@pilipinas are also planning to formally request media organizations to use some or all of the questions in their interviews with national and local candidates, as well as to send copies of the questions to the different political parties and ask them to send in the party and/or candidates' position on the issues. The questions have likewise been translated into Filipino, and I'm sure pagbabago@pilipinas would be only too happy to see them translated into as many of our regional languages as possible.

I understand there are also plans to document the candidates' replies to the questions then publish them in matrix form, the better to serve as a guide for voters in choosing the names to put on their ballots.

The following are the "11 Questions of Specific Action," with my comments and explanations which, I must emphasize, reflect only my personal opinion, not that of pagbabago@pilipinas.

* * *

1. IN THE EVENT former President Estrada is convicted, do you believe he should be pardoned?

The question draws the line once more between pro- and anti-Erap forces, and should clarify for the voter where the candidate stands in the entire complex of principles at stake in the impeachment proceedings.

2. Will you support public funding to enable present couples to choose among legal health services to achieve their desired family size and to encourage future couples to want smaller families?

In other words, does the candidate support people's reproductive health and rights, specifically the right of couples to choose their preferred method of family planning? And would the candidate let those choices be actualized through the use of government funds?

3. Will you support the fulfillment of the constitutional promise of land reform in the whole country no later than the year 2010?

Suggested follow-up: Will you use state power to go after influential landowners, especially those with the biggest landholdings?

4. Will you oppose any provision in the annual government budget whose execution requires mandatory prior consultation with legislators? Will you support a presidential veto of any such provision in an enrolled budget bill? Will you uphold non-release of funds by the budget department for any such provision that slips into law?

In other words, are you in favor of the pork-barrel system?

5. Will you support the attainment of a negotiated settlement of the communist and Muslim insurgencies no later than the year 2010?

My question: What do you mean by negotiated?

* * *

6. WILL you support all measures necessary, with adequate protection for the poor, to improve government's revenue effort to consistently yield total revenues of at least 15 percent of GDP from the year 2006 onward?

Corollary questions: Will you tax big business, especially those controlled by politically influential vested interests? Will you go after tax evaders and smugglers?

7. Will you support the immediate elimination of government control or management of any media enterprise either through privatization or by instituting multi-partisan and multisectoral control of government media organizations that cannot be privatized?

In other words: Are you truly supportive of press freedom or not?

8. Will you support full public access to complete and updated individual service records of all appointees in the PNP from the position of station chief and above?

For what purpose? So we know you aren't appointing criminals in uniform.

9. Will you support the vigorous prosecution of all cases to recover ill-gotten wealth from the Marcos era and after?

Key word: Vigorous—and swift.

10. Will you support all measures necessary to bring down the cost of electricity to consumers to levels comparable to those of our main international competitors?

Hint to interrogators: If he/she says yes, insist on getting the details.

11. Will you support an increase in real public spending per student enrolled in elementary and high school to match as soon as possible and then to maintain thereafter the level equivalent to that reached in 1987?

In other words, will you put your budget powers in the future where your rhetoric is now?

* * *

COUPLES and families, especially those labeled "deviant" by the social and moral Talibans of our country, are invited to take part in a "post-Valentine" celebration during the Second Annual "Wild Families' Day" on Sunday, Feb. 15 at the Freedom Park in UP Diliman. Organizers promise it will be fun day, anchored on the theme: "Ah, Basta Pamilya: Tungo sa Lipunang Hindi Mapanghusga (We're Family: Towards a Non-Judgmental Society)." The event is organized by Likhaan together with the UP Office of Cultural Affairs, UP Center for Women's Studies and the UP Diliman Gender Office.

Among the many fun activities scheduled for the "Wild Families Day," starting at 2:30 p.m. are: "sexciting" booths, a "wild parade" complete with *ati-atihan* dancers and costumed participants, including candidate look-alikes, games and contests and musical performances from Lolita Carbon, Layag and the UP Jazz Ensemble.

Loves of Rizal

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHEN Filipinos recall historical love affairs on Valentine's Day, the first person that comes to mind is Jose Rizal and any one of his 13 women. But then most of the women in Rizal's life are quite obscure, with the notable exception of Leonor Rivera and, of course, Josephine Bracken.

Leonor is traditionally believed to have been the model for Maria Clara in "Noli Me Tangere," and she remains in the consciousness of students forced to read the novel. Josephine or Josefina is immortalized in the closing lines of "Ultimo Adios" when Rizal sighs, "*Adios dulce extrangera, mi amiga mi alegria.*" Bracken is the "sweet foreigner" that remains in the minds of students forced to memorize and interpret Rizal's valedictory poem. Josefina may have been Rizal's sweetheart and delight, but we know very little about her.

It seems that Rizal was serious enough to propose marriage to three of the 13 women in his short life: Leonor Rivera, Josephine Bracken and Nellie Boustead. It was the last, in my opinion, who was the prettiest of them all.

Boustead was a Filipina of mixed *mestiza* and English blood. They met around 1889 in France. Quite well off, her family maintained homes in Paris and the resort town of Biarritz. Biographers say that Nellie required that Rizal convert and become a Protestant before she entertained his marriage proposal. This was impossible; Rizal would have risked being disowned by his mother.

Perhaps another reason for the failed relationship was Nellie's mother's disapproval of Rizal. Was it because of religion or because he would not have been able to give Nellie the life and comforts she had grown up with?

A handful of rather incoherent letters from Nellie appeared in English translation in the Philippines Herald in 1929. The originals are not extant and cannot be verified. All we have, for example, is a letter to Rizal dated May 11, 1891 that states:

"I have to give you an advice that I believe will be well for you to follow at least for the moment.

"It would have been preferable now that you have written to my parents in your second to the last letter, to stop asking for my hand for the time being, if you had not talked to them in the last one for altho my father understands what it is, my mother, if she understands it, the least... does not like to understand it anymore. She exposed to me the difficulties that might present themselves, that you are not so settled as to permit yourself to maintain a family, etc. etc. I answered her, 'Rizal can do what he desires; he has told me that his intention is never to marry me before he has what he lacks in order to maintain a home; and on the other hand I have shown him that I could not give him a categorical answer before he will have accepted the condition that I (have asked of him). Jose is free to do or not to do it, (and) consequently I for my part—am free to give or not to give my categorical answer to his sentiments towards me, that I like to believe are sincere.'

"Lastly, it is too long to relate to you what I said. But one of the things that she said to me (was) 'that I should not fall into the illusion of believing myself much beloved, as she does not doubt that I do not possess anything attractive.' I said that I hardly look at myself, but as to falling into illusions I believe it unlikely, because I have never... that I possessed nothing extraordinary and if I am beloved by someone, it is he that is responsible for his madness.

"I should like to beg you not to write me anymore and I... to renew it to you, even thus if you write to Miss Johnson do not talk of me anymore because I see that she is not better than other persons, and that she, like others, would like nothing more than her own (in)terest, she may yet compromise me!! What I can say is that it is difficult to watch over a house in which many women like to wag their tongues and to usurp the place of one who should be, next to the owner of the house, the only person that gives orders; in this there is no way of being in the confidence of the others..."

Who is the meddlesome Miss Johnson? We do not know.

Josephine, on the other hand, despite all the romantic ideas we maintain, had difficulty with Rizal's family. On Aug. 13, 1896 while Rizal was imprisoned on a Spanish military ship on Manila Bay, Josephine sent a letter explaining that she would try and get his clothes to him as well as the mangoes, cheese (*kesong puti*?), *tyrines* and *lansones* that he requested. After talking about pants, cuffs and collars she exclaims:

"Ah! My dear, I am suffering a great deal with them in Trozo. It is quite true they ought to be ashamed of me as they say in my face and in the presenance (*sic*) of Sra. Narcisa and their children because I am not married to you. So if you are surprized (*sic*), if you like me to send all your things on board of the man of war I can do so.

"If you go to Spain you see any one of your fancy you better marry her, but deare (*sic*) heare (*sic*) me, better marry than to live like who [what?] we have been doing. I am not ashamed to let people know my life with you but as your dear sisters are ashamed I think you had better get married to someone else..."

Love may not always be sweet and romantic, but it is the struggle to maintain it that makes it precious.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

'Intsik' secrets to success (2)

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST Wednesday, I started sharing some tips for success from the *Intsik*, the earlier generations of Chinese migrants to the Philippines. I had shared those tips earlier at an INQUIRER-sponsored inter-school seminar at the University of Asia and the Pacific and thought INQUIRER readers might be interested.

In the first part of this article, I pointed out the secret to success isn't *feng shui* and good luck charms or staying home on Friday the 13th. Instead, the "secrets" involve common sense, as we see in the first tip, which is to find, or create your own niche.

The second pointer we can pick up from the *Intsik* relates to the first: Start small. The original "*dyaryo't bote*"—people buying up old bottles and newspapers and, generally, junk—were the *Intsik*. Others started as sidewalk vendors (my maternal grandfather sold handkerchiefs on the street in Chinatown's Rosario).

Another example is SM. I still remember the original ShoeMart in the 1960s, a small shoe store on Rizal Avenue. Who would have predicted we'd see all those SM malls today? Today, older ethnic Chinese visit SM and sometimes comment, after seeing some of the stores, that they are worried that younger entrepreneurs have lost touch with reality, wanting to start too big, too soon.

The third tip again relates to the first two: Go for volume sales, rather than quick profits. The *Intsik* went for a few centavos profit at a time (well, okay, these days, a few pesos), as with my grandfather's handkerchiefs. You still see this principle working, whether for jewelry in Chinatown, clothes and school supplies in Divisoria or cell phones in Virra Mall. The reality is that there is no such thing as instant wealth; in fact, anyone who offers some investment scheme with quick returns is probably a con artist.

Quite often, this matter of yielding to the temptation to make quick profits relates to an unwillingness to start at the bottom. On a recent flight from San Francisco to Manila, I was seated beside a Filipino-American businessman who had done very well in the United States. He lamented how Filipinos in the United States, in contrast to the Chinese or the Thais, seemed to prefer working for someone in a white-collar job rather than being his or her own boss. A new Chinese migrant would start out maybe as a waiter but with the intention of saving up enough to open up his own small restaurant, putting in long hours, while aiming for small profits while serving good food. Eventually, they build up their clientele, and a little business empire.

Fourth, cultivate the *suki*, a Tagalog word derived from the Hokkien Chinese "*ju ke*," which means No. 1 customer. Make all customers—even first-time walk-ins—feel they're No. 1 with little perks, like serving coffee and snacks. More importantly, offer special discounts, credit terms or even referrals to other businesses if you don't stock what they need.

Fifth, live within your means. I've written about our tendency, especially among the Pinoy male, to splurge, and to avoid work that is "beneath" us. This *señorito* complex is found throughout the region. Indonesians call it the "*priyayi*" (aristocrat) mentality, the need to show off even if one doesn't have the means. Businesses flounder, then collapse, because money from sales, rather than being reinvested to generate more capital, are being squandered on prestige activities.

Sixth, put money into social investments. Tessie Ang See, one of the Chinoy community's leaders, put it very well in a recent TV interview, "The reality is that you actually rarely see very rich, or very poor, Chinoys."

The reason for this is that the Chinese have all kinds of mutual-help projects extending from womb to tomb: clan associations, Chinese schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, even cemeteries. The schools were built, recognizing that the most important capital any community has is that of human resources. The Chinese schools are now among the best in the country, attracting even non-Chinese families.

But there was more to these social investments than human capital. Educating the young, caring for the sick and the aged, even burying the dead, all converged to build up a sense of community and of civic duty. Early in life, the *Intsik* learned that each hungry or homeless person, each child who drops out from school, was a source of shame, impoverishing the entire community.

Some of you may be asking, what's Mike Tan's "k" (*karapatan* or right) to talk about making money when he isn't even in business? I make no such claims, or rather I'm not limiting myself to talking about making money in the business sense. The "*Intsik*" principles apply as well to government and to NGOs, the sectors I'm involved in.

I've seen too many government projects fail because of policies that are short-sighted, failing to anticipate long-term needs and niches. I see projects that remain on the drafting stage for years because we talk too much, unwilling to buckle down to handling the most difficult yet crucial part: starting the project. And when other people decide to take the initiative, moving the project and producing results, we see demolition jobs to put down those who have tried to move the organization forward.

I see constituencies neglected, when every citizen should be treated like a *suki* since it's his taxes that pay for government employees' salaries. But no, government people tend to think the public owes them, rather than the other way around.

I see agencies living beyond their means—scarce resources wasted on large buildings, plush offices, vanity brochures and advertisements in newspapers (especially these days, as politicians make a last-minute pitch for votes).

I see government and NGO executives transforming tight operating budgets into personal expense accounts. While supported by all the correct necessary vouchers and forms, the purchases are often based on the official's whims and penchant for the latest technological gizmos, rather than the agency's needs. All this is really another form of corruption, and corruption is always bad business sense.

The *Intsik* secrets aren't really confined to private businesses. We're talking here about being successful in anything we do, whatever our sector might be. And if you ask how we might distill all those "secrets," I'd say they boil down to one very basic principle: Make good by doing good.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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Urgent issues of 2004 elections

THE PROMOTION of Church People's Response (PCPR) urges the Filipino people to consider the following issues in choosing candidates this May elections:

1. On the budget—Is he/she in favor of increasing budget for education, health care and basic social services, or will he/she continue to prioritize military expenditures and foreign debt servicing at the expense of poor and hungry Filipinos?

2. On the national economy and patrimony—Is he/she committed to develop Philippine economy and patrimony based on the welfare of the majority, or is he/she an advocate of full liberalization, deregulation, privatization and other globalization policies, opening up our local agriculture and industries to unfair competition with big foreign monopolies?

3. On peasants' and workers' agenda—Is he/she an advocate of genuine land reform, increasing wages and ensuring job security for the poor?

4. On peace talks—Is he/she a constant advocate of peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippine (NDFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); or only in the election season and at times when he/she needs a boost in approval rating?

5. On human rights—Will he/she stop all-out war that brings massive human rights violations, loss of civilian lives and displacement of communities in Mindanao, Southern Tagalog and elsewhere?

6. On corruption—Is he/she committed to pursue justice in corruption and plunder cases, or is he/she also guilty of abusing public office to steal public funds, depriving the people of genuine service?

7. On Philippine sovereignty—Is he/she a defender of national sovereignty and territorial integrity; or will he/she be a willing agent of the US government in openly and covertly increasing US economic, political and military intervention in Mindanao and the whole country?

In the face of the continuing peso downfall under President Macapagal-Arroyo, whoever replaces her must face up to the challenge of ensuring not only peso recovery but comprehensive economic recovery and immediate relief for the poor majority. We call on the electorate not to vote for candidates who have been pushing for Charter change, considering that the proposed amendments allow 100-percent foreign ownership of land and local industries, and thereby placing our national economy and patrimony under tighter control of big foreign monopolies.

So long as Ms Macapagal and the other candidates are beholden to the likes of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and other big landlords and capitalists, we know that the people's clamor for genuine land reform and higher wages will continue to be ignored despite the sweetest promises that will be declared in this election season.

—REV. FR. ALLAN JOSE ARCEBUCHE, OFM,
national co-chair,
Promotion of Church People's Response, 879 Edsa, Quezon City

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Poe's love child

I AM convinced ours is a "damaged culture." Where can you find a place where an adulterer is admired for being honest for admitting a love child, and with praises coming from comedian Dolphy, former President Joseph Estrada, Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, actor Philip Salvador, and Sen. Loren Legarda?

I am praying that Fernando Poe Jr. will look into the mirror and ask himself: "Am I morally fit and able to lead my country?" If his answer is yes, I hope and pray that God bless him and open his mind to the truth: "A man without morals is like a letter without a stamp... it will go nowhere."—**Murillo Mangubat, via e-mail**

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

* * *

Children born out of wedlock should be loved by their parents. That they are so is not their choice. But I don't think a person should be proud if he or she has such a child especially if he or she is married. I believe children are a blessing but not the illegitimate ones, contrary to Senator Legarda's belief that children are always a blessing. If that were so, marriage would be totally worthless. It would be normal to have children outside marriage as long as you acknowledge them when you have to. I also believe that a public servant should be the model of moral character.—**Russel M. Magnaye, via e-mail**

* * *

I can only express admiration for Poe's candid honesty in admitting the truth—that he fathered a child out of wedlock. It's sad that his otherwise highly touted integrity has been tainted, but people should remember that other capable and honorable men before him strayed down that road, too. Even now, it's a road traveled by not a few outstanding leaders of our time, and although it's something society should not condone, it's not fair to condemn a person for it.

My thought is: Give Poe credit for being honest. I'm sure he understood the consequences of admitting in public what he did. I'm sure he thought about the high price it might cost him, but he didn't place his personal ambition over the truth. He didn't shirk responsibility for his act of weakness.

It takes a man to look someone in the eye and take responsibility for some foolish mistakes he had done. I think Poe is not only a man, he's also a tall man!—**Juanito T. Fuerte, via e-mail**

* * *

Candidates with flings and children out of wedlock prove how low the morality of Filipinos has sunk. How can a president have moral ascendancy, be a good leader, when he had an affair outside his marriage? Even if the affair was over a long time ago, it gives a glimpse into the character of the man: He cannot be trusted. Can you trust now the words of Poe that he's the messiah who can change the Philippines for the better? If he can't be faithful to his wife, never expect him to be faithful in executing his duties if he becomes the next president of our country (God forbid!).

How can we change a nation for the better when people running for public office have a morality worse than baboons? It's tragic when people like Legarda, Eddie Villanueva et al., defend Poe's immoral behavior. If he cheated on his wife of 35 years, think of what he can do to a nation. A man that cannot be faithful to the woman he marries, and professes love to the wife until death do them part cannot be faithful to the oath he will make as President of the Republic of the Philippines. Ferdinand Marcos and Estrada proved that!

Our country deserves a leader with high moral values for our young people to look up to. A leader of a nation must deserve the respect of its citizens. A person with the desire to lead a nation must be morally upright; his role involves not only leading his people but serving as a model to be emulated.

Immoral behavior should not be condoned, applauded or defended by anyone. The action of Legarda and Villanueva in defending the immoral behavior of Poe is one form of subjugating Filipinas. Their words are telling women of our beloved nation, there's nothing wrong if husbands carry affairs and sire illegitimate children. They make it appear that to be a mistress to any man is acceptable; the unfaithful husband is the norm.

To the media, refrain from asking Susan Roces questions about her husband's son outside their marriage. Wounds always heal but scars will remain; don't add insult to injury. Don't put the blame on Ron-An either, it was not his fault; it was the fault of his father (Fernando Poe Jr.).

As one famous person said a long time ago, "The world is full of simpletons and madmen that one need not see them in the madhouse." I say, our country has more than enough of them. Even those who are highly educated and looked up to are talking like morons—shooting off their mouths while their brains are not loaded!—**Ian Molina, via e-mail**

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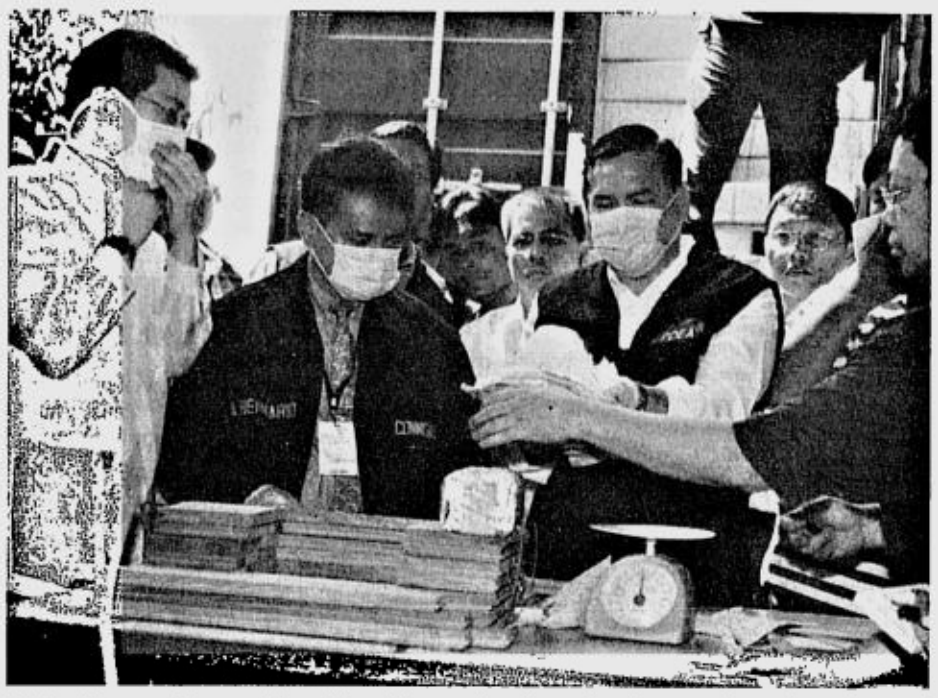
Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia



LAW enforcers mill around the shabu shipment that they seized in a warehouse in Bulacan. JOAN BONDOC

300 kg of shabu seized in Bulacan

MEYCAUAYAN, Bulacan—Agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency seized 304 kilograms of shabu worth at least P608 million from a warehouse of a plastics business firm at a subdivision in Barangay Pantok here on Thursday.

Chief Insp. Celedonio Morales, Meycauayan police chief, said PDEA agents found the shabu inside the warehouse of the WereTech Manufacturing Co., a firm engaged in plastics and furniture production.

Morales said the PDEA and members of the international police in China monitored the shipment's movement until it was delivered to the WereTech warehouse here at 6 a.m. Thursday.

He said no one was arrested in the raid but PDEA agents invited the warehouse's security guard for questioning.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the police to step up the war against illegal drugs.

A series of raids on drug laboratories, mostly found in Metro Manila, followed the President's order.

Top police officials said a sign that the renewed campaign against drugs was succeeding was the increasing street prices of illegal drugs, particularly shabu.

The officials also claimed that because the noose around drug syndicates became tighter, the supply of drugs has become scarcer.

According to earlier police reports, the country has become a dumping ground of shabu smuggled from China.

Aside from the renewed war on drugs, the President has also ordered a stepped up campaign against kidnappings in response to a wave of kidnappings in Metro Manila.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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DAVAO CAMPAIGN

Polls mean free tricycle fuel

MATI, Davao Oriental—Tricycle drivers here are celebrating as the election fever heats up.

The reason: They became recipients of free fuel, reportedly rationed by rival politicians, including Gov. Ma. Elena Palma Gil and her challenger Thelma Almario.

Some tricycle drivers claimed they got eight liters of gasoline from Palma Gil's camp and that they would be receiving a similar quantity each week.

Other drivers said they also got free fuel from Almario, the incumbent vice governor.

"That's the good side of the election season because we get fuel for free. It's a big help especially because I have eight children to feed," Ran Diego, a 34-year-old tricycle driver, said.

Jerry Cruz, another driver, said he wished that elections would be held every now and then.

Denial

Palma Gil denied she was giving away free fuel.

However, radio commentator Joana Mabini, a Palma Gil supporter, admitted she rationed the fuel.

"I would like to clarify to the tricycle drivers that the free fuel did not come from Gov. Palma Gil, it came from me," Mabini said.

She said she used her own money to buy the fuel.

The Almarios admitted giving away free fuel to tricycle drivers.

But reelectionist Rep. Joel Mayo Almario, said the rationing was only done during the "Tricycle Challenge," which he sponsored on Jan. 31.

He said the Tricycle Challenge was meant to promote the efficient use of fuel.

Treat

As this developed, the INQUIRER learned that provincial board member Carlo Rabat, Rep. Almario's political rival, had recently treated hundreds of tricycle drivers and their families to a beach party here.

The Commission on Elections in the province said the practice of giving free fuel to tricycle drivers is a violation of election laws.

Remlane Tambuang, Davao Oriental election supervisor, said if proven, erring politicians could be disqualified for "illegal form of campaigning."

"Besides, the campaign period for (local) candidates has yet to start, so I warn these politicians to stop it or else we will file charges (against them)," Tambuang said. *Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

15 soldiers hurt as 2 Army trucks turn turtle

SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan—Fifteen Army soldiers were hurt on Thursday when two military trucks hit a parked vehicle and turned turtle on the Cagayan Valley Road here.

Insp. Rizalino Andaya, town police chief, said the soldiers were on their way to Metro Manila en route to an assignment in Mindanao when the accident happened at about 2 a.m. in the highway's section in Barangay Capihan here.

Andaya said the victims are members of the First Scout Ranger Regiment based in Camp Tecson in San Miguel town. He said he and his men took the victims to the V. Luna Medical Center in Quezon City.

Reports identified only six victims: Lt. John Malong; 2nd Lt. John Malledo; 1st Lt. Jerry Morado; Privates First Class Ramir Maglangatan, Jerry Cervanio and Ronald Costales.

Investigation showed that the lead military truck, driven by Staff Sgt. Lucio Mamba, smashed into an Isuzu truck parked along the highway's shoulder.

The second truck tried to avoid the first truck and swerved to the opposite lane. Its driver, however, lost control of the wheel, causing the truck to turn turtle. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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5. Zenaida Diaz, 406 Durian St., Juna Subd., MTA Davao
6. Ms. Melvin Rabacal, 11-D Durian St., Potrero Malabon
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13. Alphon Lagaman, 67 Gumamela St. ext. Carmen, CDOC Cagayan 9000
14. Chad Anthony Tallo, 288 Jasper-I St., Fairview Village, Cebu 6045
15. John Tan, Gov. Lim Avenue, Zamboanga 7000
16. Ma. Dinna Simbulan, Lot 2 Blk. 2 Cedar St., Kingville Hills Subd., Antipolo City
17. Fr. Michael Arevalo, 555 Washington St., Palomdon Leyte
18. Julieta Olivar, Agora Mambato Lagaspan Cagayan, Misamis Oriental 9000
19. Aquileo Borja, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon
20. Lilibeth Sarmiento, Bulija Zone 7 CDO Cagayan, Misamis Oriental
21. Jhit Gonzalez, Lauag Cebu City, Cebu 6000
22. Nestor Ilao, Purok 4 Barangay San Vicente Panabo, Davao
23. Zainal Macalungan, Blk. 4 Lot 3 PNROA Subd., CDO Misamis Oriental
24. Felipe Golpe Jr., Blk. 14 Lot 16 Palmera NW7 SJDM, Bulacan
25. Chan Mary Joejie, Poblacion Sibonga, Cebu 6020

Dengue deaths alarm DOH in Negros Oriental

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Department of Health (DOH) here has expressed alarm over the deaths of two school children, including the nephew of the mayor of Tanjay City, Negros Oriental, due to dengue fever, as this year might become a dengue epidemic year for Negros Oriental.

Dr. Marichi Bolongaita, DOH provincial team leader, said the fatalities, aged seven and 11, died early this month and were pupils of the Plaza Central School in Tanjay, some 34 km north of here.

Although she did not identify the fatalities, Bolongaita said the seven-year-old victim was a nephew of Tanjay Mayor Baltazar Salma.

The boy was from Pamplona town but studied in Tanjay, she added.

Bolongaita said her office had received 52 cases of dengue from January to Feb. 12 from the different areas in the province. Negros Oriental is composed of five cities and 20 towns.

She, however, said many of the cases were recorded in Dumaguete. In Tanjay, there were nine cases, including two deaths. .

Bolongaita said the DOH and other government agencies have been conducting a massive information drive on dengue prevention because this year is feared to become a dengue epidemic year for the province.

She explained that it has been a trend that a place hit by a dengue outbreak will experience a similar outbreak every three to five years.

Negros Oriental, she added, had experienced such an outbreak about five years ago.

She said "a concerted effort among the community, non-governmental organizations, local government units, health workers, among others" is imperative to prevent such an outbreak.

Bolongaita said the most effective way in dealing with the disease was environmental sanitation.

Dengue is a viral disease transmitted by day-biting mosquitoes called *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*.

"We will simply empty water containers to deprive *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes of potential breeding places. That is the best way to control dengue," she said.

Cops nab suspect in 2001 bombing

COTABATO CITY—Police authorities in North Cotabato on Wednesday arrested in Pikit town an alleged Moro rebel bomb expert responsible for the October 2001 Kidapawan City bombing that claimed 17 lives.

Senior Insp. Santos Bautista, Pikit police chief, presented Kasim Usman alias Osas, 35, to North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol in Kidapawan City.

Bautista said a witness positively tagged Usman as the one who planted the bomb that wrecked two Weena buses at the Kidapawan terminal.

At least 23 others were hurt during the mid-afternoon explosion.

"We could not yet determine the motive (behind the bombing)," Bautista said.

But Usman said he did not plant the bomb.

He said he works with Weena as bus inspector and protecting passengers is one of his concerns.

"My job as Weena bus inspector also involves prevention of bomb attacks, why should I be the one to plant the bomb," Usman told radio station dxND in Kidapawan.

Piñol said Army intelligence reports had indicated that the suspect trained in Pakistan as a bomb maker and that he has links with the MILF.

He said at one time, the suspect also worked as a driver for former MILF chair Salamat Hashim.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu admitted Usman used to be a member of their organization.

But he said the suspect surrendered long before the fall of Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao in 2000.

"His involvement to us before is true. But he is not a member of our group anymore because he surrendered," Kabalu said. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Rosa-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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MACAPAGAL country, Lubao, Pampanga, welcomes oppositionist candidates Loren Legarda and Fernando Poe Jr. wearing its heart for all to see. EDWIN BACASMAS

SC seeks legal eagles' aid on FPJ citizenship

From page A1

VII of the Constitution, "the jurisdiction conferred upon the high court (as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal) may be invoked, and exercised after the election and proclamation of the President or Vice President."

Electoral tribunal

By invoking this section, the petitioners are "actually asking" the high court to convene itself into a Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), Mendoza said.

But Tecson yesterday said that the Constitution gave the high court the power to decide on the case, citing Section 1, Article 8.

"Judicial power includes the duty of the courts of justice to settle actual controversies involving rights which are legally demandable and enforceable, and to determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality," Tecson said, quoting the Constitution.

Because the Commission on Elections has the power to decide on all elections cases "from beginning to end of elections" and because the high court can decide on the validity of government actions such as the Comelec's dismissal of the disqualification case, then the tribunal "has the jurisdiction to make a ruling even before the May 10 elections and without convening itself as a PET," she said.

End of the matter

But opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara, who is supporting Poe, took the line of Poe's lawyers, saying he believes the high court would dismiss the case filed by Fornier because "the question of qualifications of a candidate is exclusively vested with the Commission on Elections."

"And since (Comelec) decided unanimously on two levels—division and en banc (to dismiss the petition of Fornier) I think that's the end of the matter prior to election," Angara told reporters. "If the issue is raised after the elections and after Poe wins, then the Supreme Court would have jurisdiction on (the issue)."

Fornier claimed that Poe was not a natural-born Filipino and could not run for president because he was born to an American mother before she married Poe's father in 1940. Fornier said Poe as an illegitimate child took the citizenship of his mother.

Technicality

Angara said the high court was first expected to answer the question on who has jurisdiction over Poe's disqualification case.

"I think the Supreme Court will leave the matter to the people to decide rather than knock out a candidate—a major candidate at that—on a technicality," Angara said.

He noted that the citizenship issue had been taken up by the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, which found that the documents of Fornier had been fabricated by ex-National Archives chief Ricardo Manapat.

Like Tecson, Senate President Franklin Drilon said the high court could decide on the disqualification case against Poe.

Power of review

"The SC has jurisdiction over the citizenship case of FPJ (Poe) because it has the power to review decisions of the Comelec," he told reporters.

He said the Comelec ruled on the qualification of Poe as a candidate and thus its decision could be reviewed by the high court.

"The Comelec's resolution is not the final word on the issue," he said, noting that the Constitution provides authority to the Supreme Court to "review decisions of the administrative and quasi-judicial agencies of government."

Drilon urged the high court to resolve the issue within 30 days. "So the earlier the decision is rendered, the better for the entire country," he said.

Angara also expressed the hope that the high court would decide "very quickly," saying that "as long as this uncertainty remains the more instability it will cause the political system."

Erap twits Ping over show biz

From page A1

ti-awarded actor at his peak, said presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson decided not to fuel his campaign with show biz power probably because "*wala siyang makuha* (he couldn't get any stars)."

The comment would have seemed harmless if not for the fact that Estrada, who threw his support behind best friend Fernando Poe Jr., earlier tried to talk Lacson into dropping out of the race to ensure the opposition's victory in the May polls. Lacson, standard-bearer of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, was Estrada's national police chief.

Poe, the "King of Philippine Movies," campaigned for his "Erap" when the latter ran in the past for mayor, senator, vice president and, finally, president.

Estrada called up the INQUIRER late Wednesday night to debunk President Macapagal-Arroyo's claim that she has done more for the movie industry than he ever did—and ended up defending FPJ's heavy reliance on entertainers, especially marked during the first salvo of the campaign on Tuesday.

Volunteers

"*Pinasaya 'yung masa* (he made the masses happy)," Estrada said, stressing that the star-studded kickoff rally at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City was definitely not, as critics charged, "show biz overkill."

Estrada said the actors, actresses and comedians who turned up at Poe's presentation on Tuesday were "volunteers," unlike the entertainers at President Macapagal-Arroyo's rally in Laguna. "*Mga bayaran 'yun* (they were paid)," he scoffed, "sponsored by (television station) ABS-CBN."

The performers during the administration's opening blitz at the National Arts Center in Los Baños, Laguna, were brought there by Viva Entertainment's big boss, Vic del Rosario, and headlined by the sexy-dancing Viva Hot Babes.

Did things quietly

Returning to the matter at hand, Estrada demanded: "Exactly what did (Ms Macapagal) do for the movie people?" He insisted that he, and not she, was the hero in this department, although he went about his job sans fanfare.

"I did things quietly," Estrada said. He reminded the INQUIRER that he helped establish the Metro Manila Film Festival, and that he "consistently worked" for the movie businessmen as president of the Philippine Movie Producers Association, as well as for the small members of the industry as founder of the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation.

In Los Baños, Ms Macapagal signed Republic Act No. 9239 or the Optical Media Bill, reorganizing the Videogram Regulatory Board. Estrada was not impressed, to say the least: "She is always just after publicity."

COME AND JOIN US & EXPERIENCE A THOUSAND FLOWERS IN BLOOM

The Baguio Flower Festival

Panagbenga 2004

In behalf of my partners in the service to public and the whole of Baguio City's constituency, it is with utmost pride that I extend this invitation for everyone to join us in our endeared City of Flowers on the occasion of the Panagbenga Flower Festival 2004, from February 1 to 29.

As we usher in another bouyant celebration of our Flower Festival, let us once again see the light in the dark, the joy in every impasse, and the victory amidst seeming denouement, rest assured that your humble servants shall render their unbeading succor with fervor.

Once again, may this season, "when all the flowers bloom," truly be a season of joy and spiritual renewal as we pay tribute to our wondrous ecology - a gift from the Almighty that has sustained our very existence as sentient beings.

"Umuli kayu an-nin and Mabuhay!"

HON. MAYOR BERNARDO M. VERGARA
Over-all Chairperson
Panagbenga 2004

From the exotic orchids, roses, tulips, chrysanthemum, dahlias, zinnias, hyacinths, anthuriums and the sunflower, the emblem of the Baguio flower Festival, these colorful nature wonders exude a sense of beauty, warmth and life.

Already on its 9th Year, the Panagbenga Flower Festival for 2004 is a result of the commitment of Baguio's Officialdom and constituency to produce a festival reflecting our history, tradition and values that honors the flowers and beautify our city. It is an invitation to relish the beauty that nature brings

As we usher in a month long fun filled celebration, let us once again show the whole world that Panagbenga signifies the unity of the people of our beloved city and as City of Baguio blooms with the flowers this February, be one with us and the people in the spirit of Panagbenga.

In behalf of the Sanggunian Panlungsod ng Baguio, my staff and my Family, we invite you to join us as we Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom!!!

ATTY BETTY LOURDES F. TABANDA
City Vice Mayor

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
Feb. 01 - 29	Market Encounter	Melvin Jones Football Field
	Landscaping Competition	Melvin Jones Football Field
	Carpet of Flowers	Melvin Jones Football Field
Feb. 13 - 14	Burnham Lake Flower Fest	Burnham Lake
Feb. 15 - 29	Flower Fest Arts & Cultural Show	Malcolm Square/Botanical Garden/ Sunshine Park
Feb. 15	Pony Boys Day	Athletic Bowl
Feb. 20 - 25	Bar's "Shake Baguio Shake"	Malcolm Square
Feb. 21	The Grand Opening Parade (Street Dancing Competition)	City's main thoroughfares ending at the Athletic Bowl
	Fireworks Competition	Athletic Bowl/Burnham Park
Feb. 22	Panagbenga Bodybuilding Competition	Baguio Convention Center
	The Parade of Floats & Brass Band Competition	City's main thoroughfares ending at the Athletic Bowl
	Fireworks Display	CBD
Feb. 23 - 29	Session Road In Bloom	Session Road
Feb. 29	The BFF National Half Marathon and 5Km & 10Km Fun Run	City's thoroughfares
	The Closing Ceremony	Athletic Bowl
	Fireworks Display	Athletic Bowl

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Biazon calls Roco a liar

From page A1

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said two potential running mates had asked him for money—one wanted tens of millions of pesos, and the other, hundreds of millions of pesos.

"I don't want to mention names but they know who they are," Lacson told reporters after attending the anniversary celebration of Kidapawan City in North Cotabato.

"We were not even talking of money to take care of campaign expenses. These were just for their personal consumption," Lacson said after he addressed some 5,000 people gathered at the Kidapawan gymnasium.

Lacson said Bayani Fernando Jr., Metro Manila Development Authority chair, was not one of the two politicians who had asked him for money. "In fact, he even asked me how much he would have to spend if he made a bid for the vice presidency."

VAL HANDUMON

UP IN ARMS in Binangonan, Rizal, President Macapagal and her vice presidential candidate, Noli de Castro, abetted by former Rizal Gov. Casimiro Yñares are on a campaign offensive.

JOE GALVEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

HEAVY rains do not dampen the smiles of presidential bet Sen. Panfilo Lacson in Digos City, Davao del Sur, on Thursday. He's on the second day of his three-day swing through the Davao provinces.

Libel

Biazon said he was talking to his lawyers about the possibility of filing a libel case against Roco.

In case Biazon files a libel suit against Roco, Senate President Franklin Drilon, chair of the Liberal Party to which Biazon now belongs, said he was "willing to appear as witness and support his allegations because I know the truth."

Drilon said he was the one who recruited Biazon into the LP when the party had not yet decided to support Ms Macapagal, one of the six presidential candidates in the May elections.

"When the LP finally decided on Jan. 3 that we will support President Macapagal-Arroyo, I personally nominated Senator Biazon to be the second nominee of the LP in the coalition party," Drilon said at a separate news conference in the Senate.

"So there is absolutely no truth to the allegation that Senator Biazon received P30 million in campaign funds for joining the K-4 coalition," he said.

Not worried

But Roco stood by his claim. At a news briefing in Legazpi City, Roco said it was Biazon himself who relayed the information to him.

"He was the one who called me and said that he had been offered P30 million. He also said he refused, and I said that he did not accept (the bribe). Then I was asked if he accepted (it) later on, I said, 'I don't know, you better ask him,'" Roco said.

He said he was not worried (about Biazon's threat to sue him for libel) because what he said was the truth. "Truth is a defense in libel," he said.

Roco said he did not volunteer the information during a dinner with the INQUIRER's chief executives, editors and reporters on Monday night. At the time, Roco was reluctant to reveal what he and Biazon talked about until an editor prevailed upon him to do so.

"Now, I guess that should end there because I never said (that), and the article in the INQUIRER never said that I said that he accepted P30 million," Roco said.

Five points

At his news conference, Biazon said he was forced to speak out because of the serious allegation against him.

He said he left Roco's alliance because he did not see how it could support his five points of advocacy (reforms in the Armed Forces, review of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, housing, creation of a P10-billion cooperative capital development fund, and reproductive health).

"I joined the Liberal Party because I like the ideology of the Liberals and they promised they would support my five points of advocacy," Biazon said.

Personality differences

He said there was another reason he decided to leave Roco's alliance but he did not want to elaborate on this. Earlier, Biazon had said these were personality differences.

Biazon said he told Roco on the phone that he was joining the LP. He said he left Pag-asa "without rancor in my heart."

He reiterated several times that he did not want to "stoop" to the level of his detractors because he would rather stick to issues than engage in personal attacks.

But sometimes he couldn't hold back his emotion. Biazon, for instance, said there were big questions about Roco and his alliance.

"Why can't (Pag-asa) complete its senatorial lineup? Why (is it that) none of the six governors of Bicol (Roco's political turf) are rooting for Roco?" he said in Filipino. "These are just questions. I did not say personality defects."

'Factory defect'

Biazon took exception to Roco's statement that he was a "factory defect" of the Philippine Military Academy where he graduated, saying that he had defended the Constitution and the people many times.

Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff, defended the Aquino administration against coup attempts.

He said he would not allow himself to be thrown in the mud where his detractors were. But if forced to throw mud, he said he had more mud against Roco.

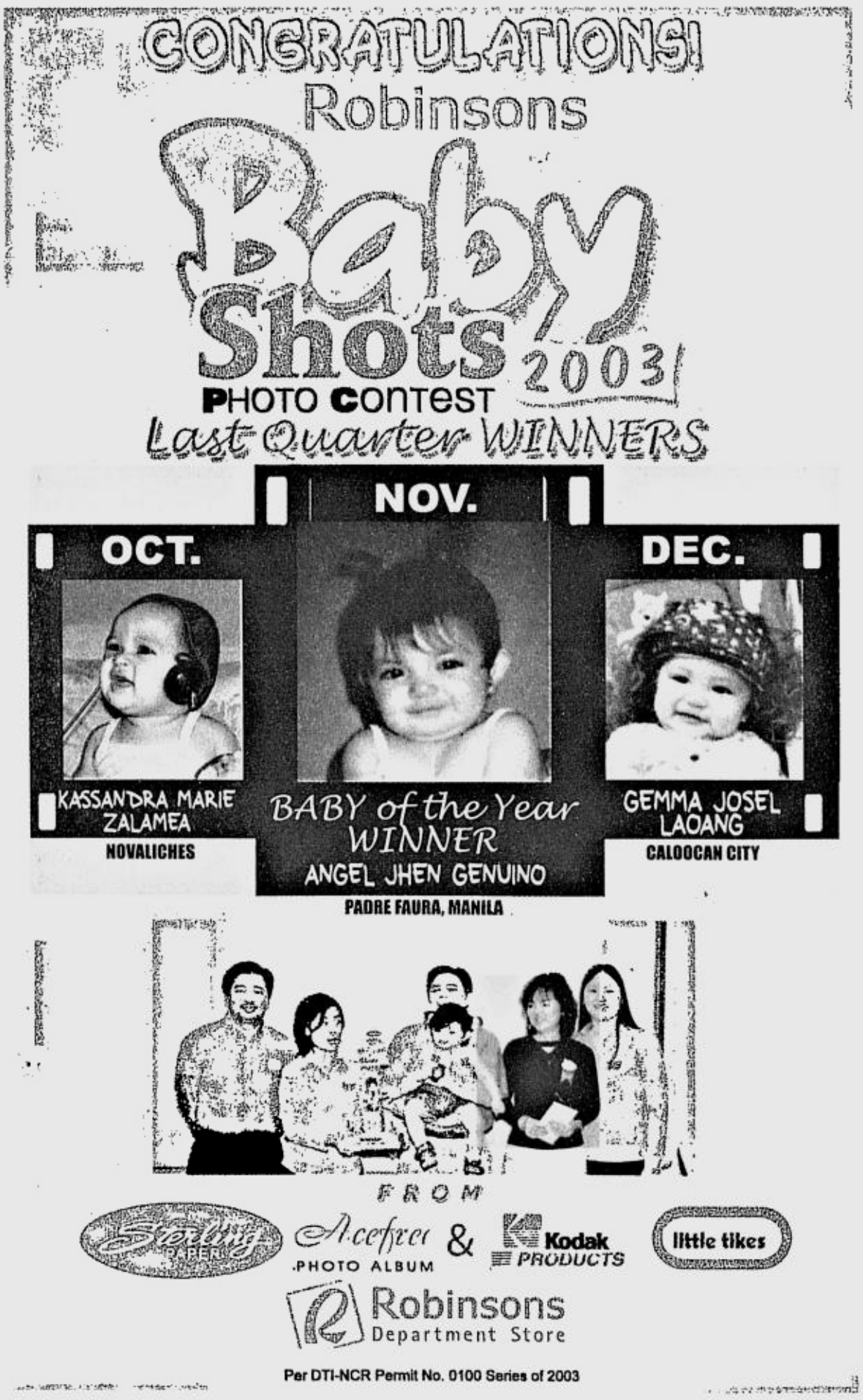
Sensitive

Roco said that if Biazon "felt offended by that—there's absolutely nothing wrong with what I've stated—(and he) is that sensitive, I can understand why he is sensitive."

Roco admitted Biazon had asked his permission to join the Liberal Party. "The next day, he said he would join the Liberal and where it would go, there he would go. But the chairperson emeritus of the Liberal Party is Gloria so we know that."

The presidential candidate said he did not make a big fuss over Biazon's defection to the administration coalition. "And I was not saying anything about him, but when I was asked by the (INQUIRER) editors, you can't tell a lie. So I said the truth. Why is he sad?"

Roco maintained that he was "in culture shock for two to three days" about Biazon's decision, "but now I believe."



Cory donates her painting . . .

From page A1

in Makati City yesterday. The garden landscape, rendered on 18"x24" canvas, was finished last December.

PEF treasurer Carlos Dominguez, who was agriculture secretary during Aquino's term, said it cost up to P1 million to raise an eaglet to maturity at age five or six years.

Aquino said she hoped her gesture would draw more private donors to the cause at hand and ultimately rouse patriotic fervor in addressing perennial concerns in environmental conservation.

"This is what I've been advocating especially (among) big corporations," she said, and then sadly noted: "Everybody talks about corporate social responsibility (but) I feel that we Filipinos are not as nationalistic as our neighbors."

People Power people

The key figure in the uprising that toppled the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, Aquino ranked the PEF among genuine "People Power people—because they are doing this for love of country."

She coined the label last year in launching an annual tribute to non-profit groups or projects that uplifted marginalized sectors despite scant government support.

Set up in 1987, the PEF runs the five-hectare Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Davao City. The sanctuary made world headlines in 1992 when it hatched its first eaglets Pag-asa (Hope) and Pagkakaisa (Unity) in 1992. Today, it is home to 31 Philippine eagles, 15 of them bred in captivity.

There are an estimated 500 pairs of Philippine eagles in the wild, scattered around Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao.

Surviving largely on foreign grants and corporate sponsorships, the foundation has expanded its work to conducting community-based livelihood programs.

Formerly called "monkey-eating eagle," the country's national bird has been the subject of conservation efforts since the mid-'60s, when Filipino scientist Dioscoro Rabor raised the alarm over the species' fast-diminishing numbers.

But it took Americans—the legendary aviator Charles Lindbergh and, later, Peace Corps volunteers led by Robert S. Kennedy—to sustain the campaign up till the late '70s.

World's tallest

To minimize expenses on meat fed to the eagles, the center raises its own rabbits and guinea pigs, Dominguez said.

Once fully developed, the species *Pithecophaga jefferyi* can live up to 50 years. This species is prized for being the "tallest" eagle in the world, Dominguez added.

It's also so powerful that it can crush a human skull with its talons, according to PEF president Carlos Pedrosa.

But for all its ferocity, Pedrosa said, this "noble hunter" has one hardly known virtue: a male takes only one mate "for life."

This bit of trivia brought a smile to Aquino's face.

National treasure

"(Providing for) the eagle as a national treasure is really more about preserving its habitat," Pedrosa explained.

"It depends on the rainforest for its continued existence. It serves as a barometer: when you see that the eagle is gone, it means that the rainforest is going."

Also present at yesterday's turnover rites was PEF trustee and former Air Force chief William Hotchkiss.

Aquino expressed her intent to help PEF during her visit to the Malagos sanctuary on Jan. 14.

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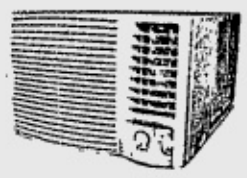

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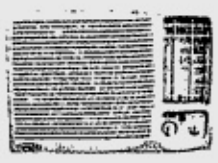

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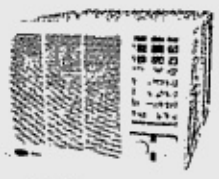

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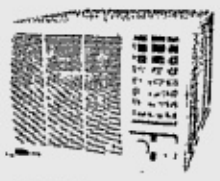

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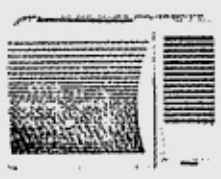

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SUPERLOTTO 6/49
1 24 25 30 36 41

Ailing death con hauled back to Bilibid

LUMANOG

By Philip Tubeza, Tina Santos and Joyce Abaño

WITHOUT a proper court order, ailing death convict Lenido Lumanog on Wednesday night was taken out of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute and hauled back to the National Bilibid Prisons, according to the convict's lawyer.

The Supreme Court has yet to act on the NBP's motion ordering Lumanog's transfer, when prison officials came knocking at the kidney institute at around 10 p.m. Wednesday, according to Lumanog's lawyer, Soliman Santos Jr.

Lawyer Roberto R. Sangalang, chief legal officer of the Bureau of Corrections, led the team that took the ailing convict into custody on orders of Dionisio R. Santiago, BuCor director, Santos said.

Lumanog's lawyer in a statement described the prison officials as "Gestapo-like" when they brazenly disregarded the rule of law, civility and decency by taking a sick man into custody without the proper court order.

Leaking roof

Sangalang said during an interview that they had indeed filed a motion for Lumanog's transfer, but added that the court motion was not really necessary.

"We do not need a clearance because, in the first place, the order was for Lumanog to be taken to the NKTI to be treated," Sangalang said. "And since the doctors had already said he is fit for discharge, it was up to the director or the superintendent to say he should be brought back here."

Sangalang said the only reason for the delay in transfer was because the room where Lumanog would be confined in had a leaking roof that had to be fixed.

Lumanog is now placed in isolation at the NBP hospital upon the advice of NKTI doctors.

Sangalang said Lumanog was taken into custody in the presence of his lawyer, his wife and three children.

Lumanog lashed back at the BuCor official, saying that he had already lodged a protest in writing and submitted it to Sangalang, "who acknowledged it."

"The transfer is made even more contemptuous as it was led by a lawyer officer of the court who, on Feb. 3, filed on behalf of BuCor an urgent motion with the Supreme Court for an order to authorize the transfer but which has not yet been acted upon, as far as we know," Santos said, referring to Sangalang.

Fit for discharge

Santos said that the NBP team went to the hospital at night, "well after office hours so there could be no recourse to the courts."

"(Sangalang) refused the pleas of Lumanog's wife that the transfer, if it could not be avoided, be done instead the following morning, after a night's rest and in broad daylight for the safety of all concerned," Santos said.

He said that the transfer was made based on the recommendation of NKTI Director Dr. Enrique T. Ona, who informed the NBP that Lumanog "is now fit for discharge" and that all "he needs is a regular follow-up at (NKTI's) Out-Patient Services after his transfer to your hospital."

But Santos said that Ona is not one of Lumanog's doctors, one of whom said that he needs a special room where he can safely continue his post-transplant recovery.

Santos said Lumanog's doctor found that the conditions at the NBP hospital did not fit the bill.

Antiseptic room

In a recent interview, Ona explained that, ordinarily, a patient who has had a kidney transplant needs to stay in the hospital for seven to 12 days.

Ona added that the doctors at the NBP hospital assured him that the "special antiseptic room" is clean and reasonable enough to accommodate post-transplant patients like Lumanog.

"We have bent our backs long enough for (Lumanog)," Ona said, adding that the NKTI has not enough rooms to accommodate other kidney transplant patients.

Poor patients

Ona also said that they have several patients who are "poor and whose living conditions were worse than Lumanog."

Lumanog was one of five men convicted for the 1996 killing of Col. Rolando Abadilla.

They are appealing their conviction before the Supreme Court.

Lumanog had been confined at the NKTI for more than a year, following an organ transplant.

NBI men not about to take Saycon accuser seriously

By Leila Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation is not about to take seriously the man who claimed to have interviewed Pastor "Boy" Saycon and implicated the civil society leader in the Oakwood mutiny and a grand plot to destabilize the government.

According to Marianito Panganiban of the bureau's Special Task Force, the NBI first would have to evaluate the affidavit of Benjie Peralta before considering taking him on as a witness in the Kawal Pilipino investigation.

Alleged soldiers and members of the group Kawal Pilipino held a press conference a few weeks ago, where they accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of ordering the military to spy on her rivals.

Saycon had been tagged the mastermind of the plot.

But according to Saycon, Peralta's statement is nothing more than a fabrication.

Saycon said he had never granted an interview with Peralta and pointed out that the Philippine National Police earlier had disregarded the charges Peralta had hurled against him.

"That guy (Peralta) is forum shopping," Saycon said.

Should the NBI take on Peralta as a witness, Saycon said it would mean the bureau is stooping to a very low level to pin him down.

"That would be very shameful for the NBI," he said.

Saycon also said that his participation in the Kawal Pilipino conference should not be misconstrued as an attempt to destabilize the government.

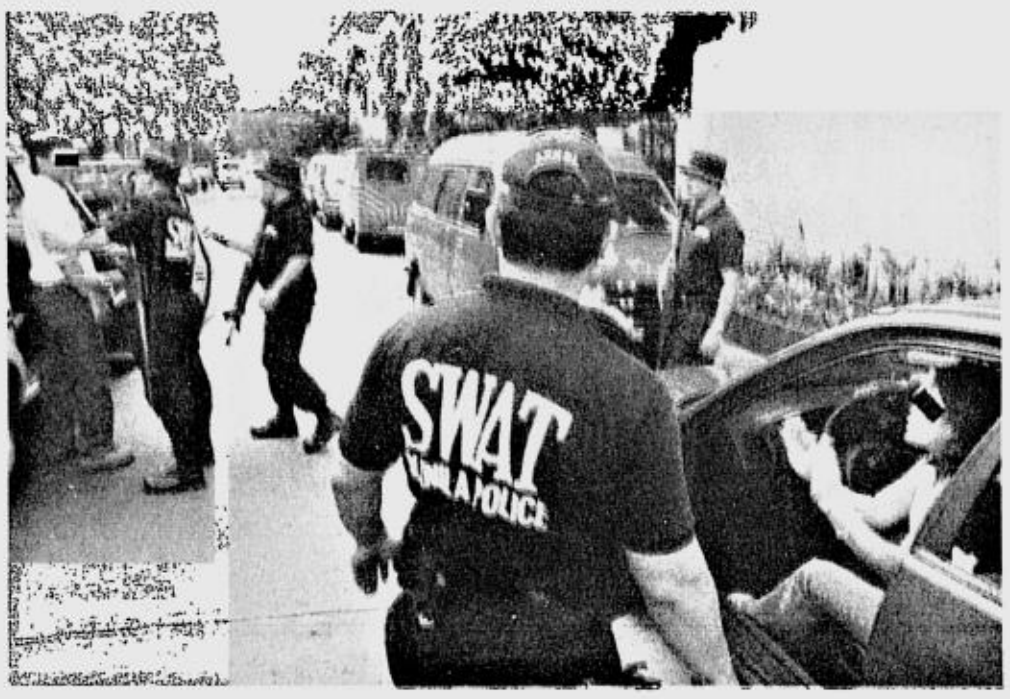
He added that Peralta is not even an employee of any newspaper as he had claimed.

When Peralta introduced himself to the NBI, he claimed to belong to the Nation Broadcasting Corporation and the BST Trimedia group. The NBI has confirmed that he is a contributor to one of the said companies.

Last November, Peralta submitted a five-page affidavit to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, where he accused Saycon, secretary-general of the Council on Philippine Affairs, of planning to overthrow the Macapagal Administration by peaceful means and install a revolutionary government.

Peralta said Saycon planned to replace Ms Macapagal with Vice President Teofisto Guingona or Senator Serge Osmena.

He said that Saycon had revealed to him that Copa is part of a larger group that is out to overthrow the government.



CRIME OF PASSION
Responding to reports of an abduction, policemen accost a red Honda Civic along Pedro Gil in Manila. It turns out that the woman in the car was "abducted" by her lover (left background) due to a spat.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

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Bets urged to sort out sorties with LGUs

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

DON'T let them be the last to know.

Police and local Commission on Elections officials yesterday called on national candidates to first coordinate with local officials before storming cities and municipalities begging for votes.

This came after the local officials saw how the rallies and motorcades of national candidates during the first few days of the campaign period snarled traffic and caused chaos in several areas.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo De Leon yesterday told the INQUIRER that the competing parties should first coordinate with the local police and Comelec office of the cities or municipalities they plan to visit.

He said this would prevent traffic jams and any untoward incident during the sorties as the police would have enough time to prepare.

Preparations would include possible traffic rerouting to ensure smooth and continuous vehicular flow.

De Leon added that the NCRPO is ready to provide security to all the parties to ensure the safety of the candidates and their supporters.

"But they should give us proper advice," De Leon said.

Malabon City elections officer Villamor Igne said it was the responsibility of candidates to sort out their campaign plans with local Comelec officers.

End of long and winding Makati roadwork seen

By Margaux Ortiz

THE END is near—that is, for the road construction project on Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo).

Antonio Amiscaray, director of the Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project (MMURTRIP), said that the project is 87 percent complete as of end of January.

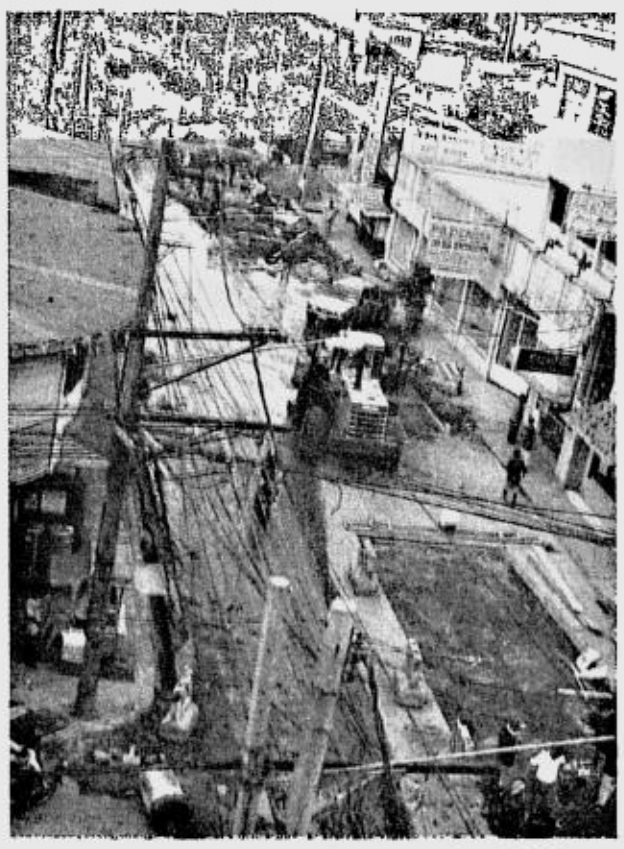
"The project contractor has committed to finish all major road constructions two weeks from now," Amiscaray said during a phone interview.

R-II Builders had initially promised to finish major parts of the project by Feb. 15. But they missed the deadline due to "technical problems," he added.

Amiscaray said they have finished with the roadwork from Pasay Road to Vito Cruz Extension.

But he added that only one lane is passable from Vito Cruz Extension to J.P. Rizal, because of "minor work activities" in the area.

"We are positive that we will beat the March 7 deadline in the completion of this entire project," Amiscaray said.



WORK crews rush to complete the construction of the last stretch of Chino Roces Avenue leading to J.P. Rizal Street in Makati City.
RUDY ESPERAS

WIDOWS (from left) Zenaida Sumido, Rebecca Lopez, Marilou de los Santos and Lilibeth Oanes show photographs of alleged torture marks on the bodies of their husbands during a media presentation Thursday. JOAN BONDOC

BONNET GANG

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By Tina Santos

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The injuries, Cruel said, indicated that the slain suspects could have been tortured then summarily executed.

"Most of the gunshot wounds entered the back," the CHR forensics expert said.

He also noted contusions on their bodies, abrasions in their wrists and cuts in their finger tips which they could not have suffered in a gun battle.

Yesterday, the widows of four of the suspects appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to help them seek justice.

Ironically, Ms Macapagal had lauded members of the Western Police District who killed the six men whom they described as members of the notorious "Bonnet Gang."

The widows claimed that their husbands were sacrificed to justify the setting up of police checkpoints in Metro Manila.

The checkpoints were part of the government's anti-crime efforts.

Lilibeth Oanes, Marilou de los Santos, Rebecca Lopez and Zenaida Sumido vehemently denied that their husbands were criminals.

Their husbands were among six men gunned down along President Sergio Osmeña Sr. Highway (formerly South Super Highway) last Dec. 3.

Five of the six fatalities have been identified as Cenando Lannu, 53, a retired Marine sergeant from Nueva Ecija; Romeo de los Santos, 37, a driver from Welfareville compound, Mandaluyong; Rodolfo Oanes, 40, a tourist guide from Nueva Ecija; Geronimo Lopez, 43, a Nueva Ecija native and a Mandaluyong resident; and Edgar Sumido, 49, a native of Jaro, Ilo-ilo and believed to be a member of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan.

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While in transit at about 1 p.m., however, a heavily tinted Mitsubishi Adventure without license plates blocked the path of their Mazda (WBY 305) at the corner of 9th Street and Broadway Centrum in New Manila.

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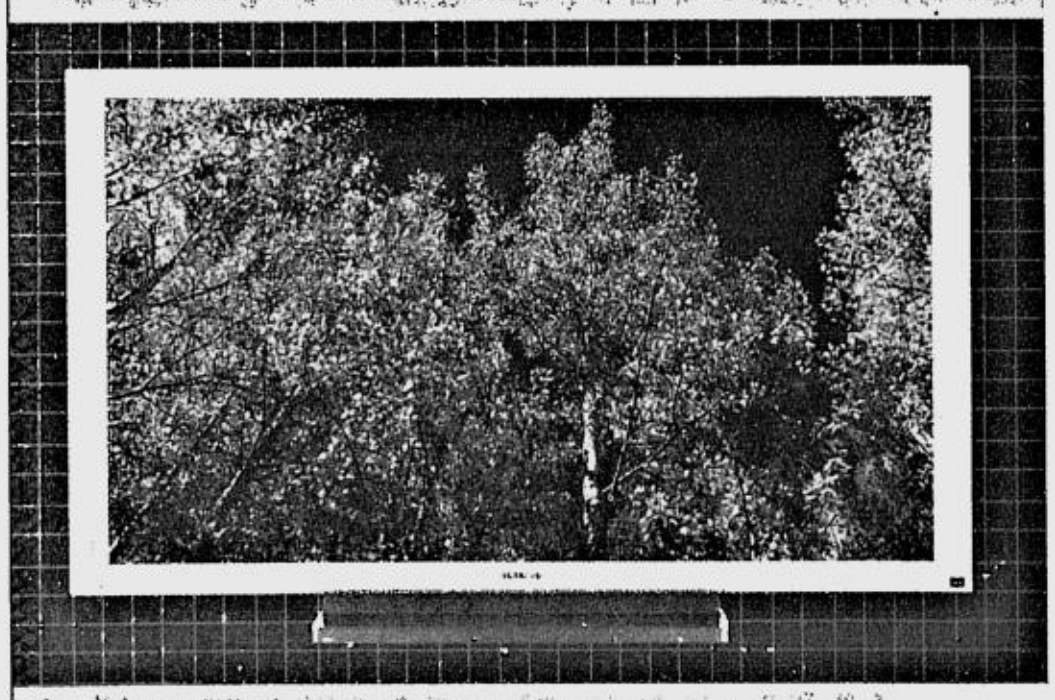

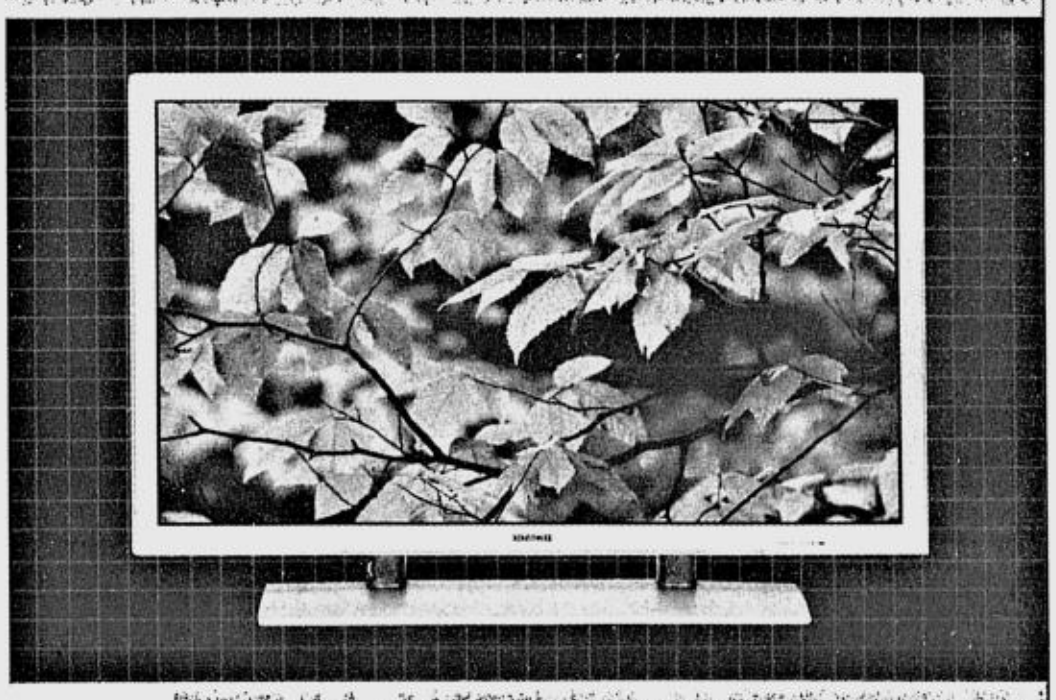

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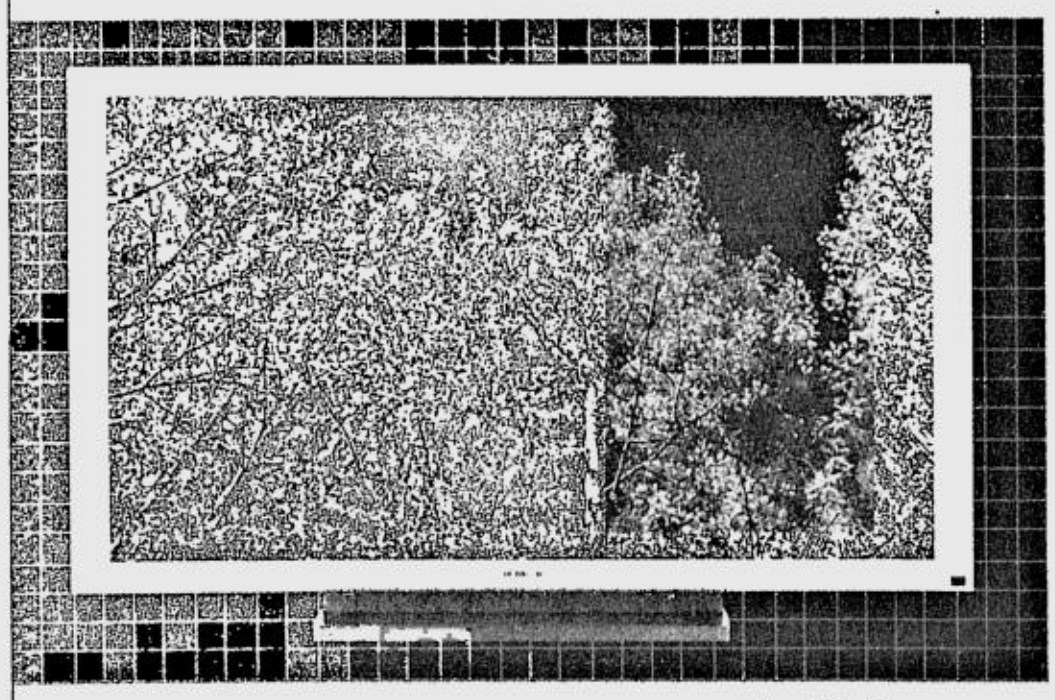

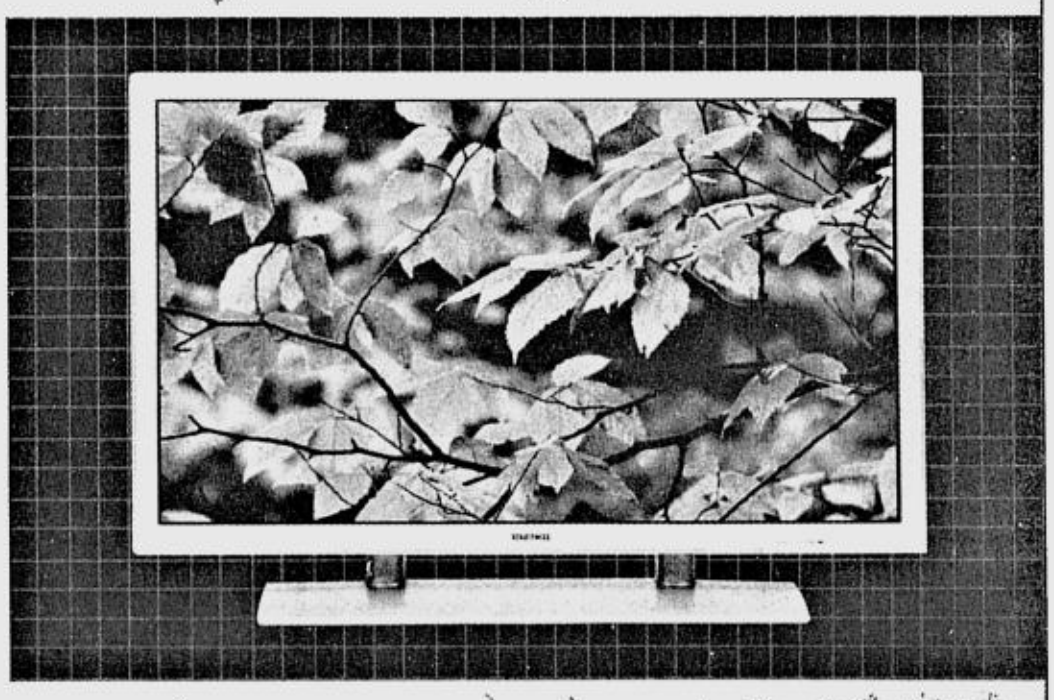

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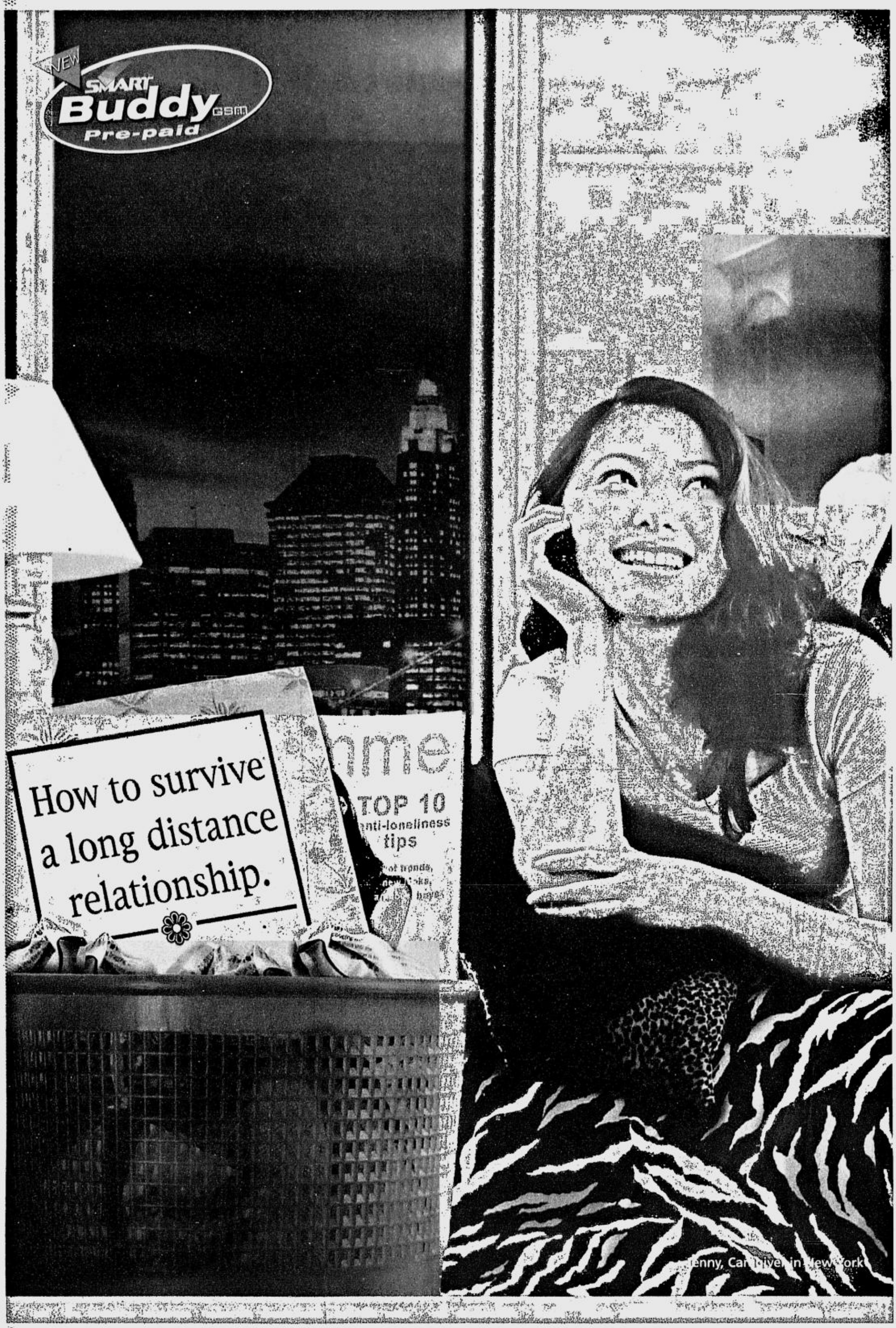

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games-2002 All-Star Game; 8:30 a.m.; Solar Sports—Kobe Bryant is named MVP in his hometown of Philadelphia after leading the West. Tracy McGrady leads the eastern team, coming off the bench for 24 points. He is instrumental in the East's push to get back in the game, which ultimately falls short.

Schedule subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Black does a Bayno for UST Tigers

FORMER Sta. Lucia and San Miguel Beer coach Black puts the UST Tigers to their paces in yesterday's workout. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Dennis U. Eroa

IT'S NOW the turn of the University of Santo Tomas Tigers to get a little help from their American connection.

As Bill Bayno continues to sharpen the claws of the Ateneo Eagles in time for this year's UAAP season, the Tigers, known for their no-surrender moods, aren't going to be left behind.

Yesterday, bona fide PBA champion mentor Norman Black, still fit at 46, started to conduct a training regimen designed for UST's not-so-big men at the Tigers' gym along España.

Like Bayno, Black isn't going to call the shots for the Tigers in the UAAP. Leading officials from the university, which ruled the league with an iron hand from 1993-96, are presently busy finding a replacement for the mercurial re-

BLACK/ A27

RP cyclists finish with big lead pack

JOHOR BAHRU—Five of the Filipino riders expertly rode with the huge 107-man lead pack two Brazilians towed to the finish here as the standings stood still after Stage 6 of the Tour de Langkawi Wednesday.

Victor Espiritu, Alfie Catalan, Merculio Ramos, Ryan Tanguilig and Lloyd Lucien Reynante were credited with the same time of 3 hours, 39 minutes and 20 seconds that Ivan Quaranta posted for nipping Luciano Pagliariri for lap honors at the finish of the 175-km stage from Muar to this shopping haven in the southernmost tip of Malaysia.

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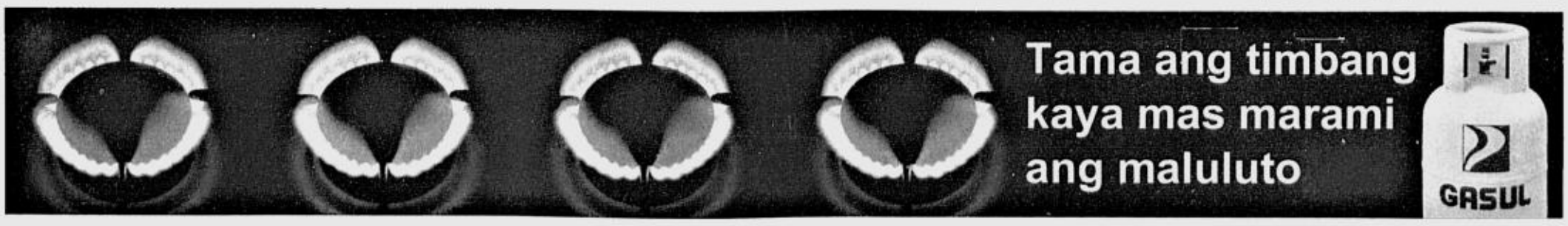

Tama ang timbang
kaya mas marami
ang maluluto

GASUL

Lipa back on bench with RP U-20 five

JOE Lipa is back with the national team.

After launching the Champions League last year, Lipa comes out of semi-retirement to serve the country anew as a coach of the RP 20-and-under team to the fourth Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Young Men's championship set in September in Tehran, Iran.

"Basketball stays in my blood, it remains my passion. I see the Filipinos still love basketball, too, and I am proud and honored to coach our best and young players," said Lipa.

A stickler for discipline and professionalism, Lipa has called on "all available top players in the collegiate and amateur ranks" to join the tryouts starting Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and the ensuing sessions at the same venue from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday.

"We're leaving it to coach Joe Lipa to form a very competitive RP Team. We're confident that, with Lipa, we're going to have the most competitive squad in years," said BAP president Quintellano "Tiny" Literal.

Lipa's impressive track record includes steering an amateur team composed of Benjie Paras, Jerry Codiñera and Alvin Patrimonio to a bronze-medal finish in the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul, Korea.

In his last tour of duty in 1995, he guided a team featuring Marlou Aquino and Bal David to the Southeast Asian Games title in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Before the Champions League, Lipa was the commissioner of the UAAP, a position he accepted after leaving the Ateneo Eagles in 2002.

Lim: BAP can do it sans PBA help

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association could be wasting time and effort altering its format to accommodate the national team into the league's schedule.

This developed as Graham Lim, secretary general of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, yesterday shot down the idea of giving the PBA a free hand in organizing the country's campaign in international meets like the ABC championship and the Asian Games.

"We are in the process of developing the country's basketball program for us to compete against powerhouse countries in the ABC and Asian Games," Lim told the INQUIRER.

LIM: No thanks

"With the program already in place and the entry of an avid supporter in Cebuana Lhuillier, the BAP can stand on its own in both tournaments," he added.

Since 1990, the PBA had taken care of funding and preparing the national team which competed in the Asian Games.

Last year, the PBA dumped the old three-conference format for a calendar that, among

LIM/ A28

Bad news for badminton

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WHAT'S this I hear that badminton is not in the Manila SEA Games calendar next year? If true, wouldn't that be as big a surprise as the presidential candidacy of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, if not FPJ?

Pray, tell me, it isn't true.

Badminton has become a craze this side of the globe. Badminton courts have sprouted nationwide like mushrooms. You see kids play the game all around you. By next year, who knows, we could be producing world-caliber badminton players already, if not probable SEA Games champions in both the men and women divisions.

What could be the reason behind the move to remove badminton from the roster of next year's SEA Games events?

I can see one reason: We can't win the gold in this sport. Not next year. You can't become champion overnight.

The fear is valid.

For one, the Indonesians, perennial title contenders in the SEA Games, are consistent world contenders in badminton. For another, right now, we are not even among the Top 20 badminton players in the world.

The Indonesians have that reputation for ages. If basketball is our game, badminton is to the Indonesians.

After Weena Lim, our 1996 Atlanta Olympian, I can't think of another Filipina badminton player as good as she is. (I wish Weena could soon produce another "Wondrous Weena" to represent the country in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.)

The decision to exclude badminton, if true, would again resuscitate that ugly provision in the SEA Games charter allowing host countries to choose events they want played in the biennial meet.

It is ugly because if an event is not popular in the host country, the host country has the exclusive right to remove it from the Games calendar.

It happened again last year, when Vietnam scrapped golf and bowling because both events did not assure the hosts of gold medals. Golf and bowling being not popular in Vietnam, the hosts struck them out of the roster. That did away several gold medals staked in both disciplines, which could have posed, in their initial estimation, problems in their quest for a first ever overall victory. But as things turned out, even the inclusion of golf and bowling could not have stopped the Vietnam juggernaut from speeding to victory. The hosts won running away.

Rules have a way of making one a winner, depending on how one uses them.

But again, ugly as the rule maybe, it's the rule. Everybody has to follow it. No, respect it. You can't go join the event and once you have landed at your host's soil, you begin to criticize your host's decision to scrap this or that sport just because you felt it had unfairly put you in a bad position to go for the overall title. No. That's being immature. Un-sportsmanlike even.

Anyway, we still have many more months to go before we host the 2005 SEA Games. That's a lot of time to reconsider the decision to scrap badminton.

If only for the sake of the nation's burning romance with the game today, maybe it'd be worth our while to not make a final decision on this now. There's more time to think over it, fellas. So, no need to hurry. Haste makes waste, right?

And, yes, I have so much faith in Richie Garcia, the former PSC commissioner, who, I was told, heads the Philippine Olympic Committee side now studying which disciplines are to be included in the 2005 SEA Games. Maybe, you could update me on this, Richie?

Am just a text/call away, partner.

***

FASTBREAK. The magic of Ateneo did wonders again last Saturday, resulting in the stunning championship win of Fash in the highly successful PBL Platinum Cup. Rich Alvarez, L.A. Tenorio, Wesley Gonzales and Larry Fonacier, all from Ateneo, did the most damage in Fash's title-clinching victory over Welcoat that gave coach Junel Baculi his record-equaling seventh crown in the PBL. Cecilio de Pedro, Fash owner, is a lucky man indeed as he always had Ateneo players in his lineup each time he won; already, De Pedro had pocketed three PBL titles with Blue Eagles comprising the core of his teams. I wonder if he has acknowledged that at all. Meanwhile, for the PBA-bound Alvarez (Shell) and Gonzales (FedEx), what a fitting goodbye to their amateur career. It was almost like a fairy-tale ending, particularly for Alvarez, who seems to have it all: skills, talent and the luck to be at the right place and at the right time.

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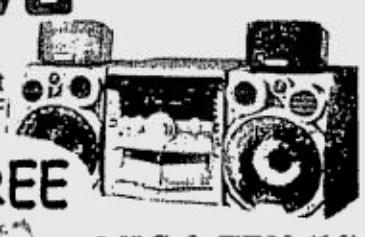
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RP cyclists . . . From page A25

Roland Gorrantes was the only RP rider who struggled home after figuring in a 15-man crash at the 40-km point.

Team Pagcor remained in fourth place behind Japan, Iran and China.

Espiritu and Tanguilig also held on to their 8th and 9th places, respectively in the Asian Individual category with Iran's Ghader Mizbani still on top.

The RP Pagcor riders stood their ground in the midst of roughhousing to trashtalking that were the order of the day during the long boring ride.

PACQUIAO

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SCOOP AWARDS

2003 best athletes feted again tonight

THE SPORTS Communicators Organization of the Philippines (SCOOP) holds tonight its own Annual Awards Night at the Bulwagan Room of the Pantalan Maynila Specialty Restaurant at the Luneta.

Twenty-five athletes will be honored, led by the Achiever of the Year Awardee, world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who will be accorded a 23-inch Gawad Pancho Villa Barako Silver Cup.

The awards start at 7 p.m. with Manila Mayor Jose "Lito" Atienza as guest of honor and speaker.

SCOOP members, honorees and guests are requested to come early for registration, which starts at 5 p.m.

The complete list of awardees:

Gawad Pancho Villa Barako (Achiever of the Year)—Manny Pacquiao

Gawad Kahusayan (Ten Outstanding Pilipino Sportsmen)—Christian Jan Suarez, RP Three-Woman Team, Arvin Ting, Rene Catalan, Bacolod City Girls Softball Team, Mark Paragua, Marcus Valda, Rexel Ryan Fabriga, Willie Malalad and the RP Traditional Boat Race Team.

ATIENZA

Gawad Bukas-Landas (Vic Villafranca Memorial Trailblazers Award)—Eduardo Buenavista, Glenn Aguilar and Juan Carlos Miguel Mendoza.

Gawad Ningning (Brilliancy Award)—Eugene Torre and Ronald Dableo.

Gawad Kabataan (Sim Sotto Memorial Youth Award)—Jayvee Agojo, Rachelle Ann Cabral, Kenneth San Andres and Marichi Gandionco.

Gawad Habang Buhay (Lifetime Achievement Award)—Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan.

Gawad Liderato (Sports Leadership Award)—Steve Hontiveros, Sen. Robert Jaworski Sr., Eric Buhain, Celso Dayrit, Go Teng Kok, Bong Coo, Arnold "Ali" Atienza, Lydia de Vega-Mercado, Bert Lina, Gov. Tomas Joson III, Sang Youl Eom and Hermie Esguerra.

Gawad Kabisig for Friends of SCOOP—George Chua, Vicvic Villavicencio and Mayor Jose "Lito" Atienza.

Seventeen more individuals whose achievements, leadership and support have contributed to the growth of Philippine sports will also be feted.

The Annual Awards Night is sponsored by San Miguel Corp., the Philippine Sports Commission, Mayor Atienza and Photokina Marketing, and supported by Airfreight 2100, the Philippine Basketball Association and the Philippine Basketball League.

NSAs give Buhain deadline on funds

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LEADERS of grumbling national sports associations yesterday vowed to hold a protest rally if the Philippine Sports Commission doesn't start releasing their funds on or before March 15.

While they have yet to sign the petition letter to Malacañang asking for the removal of PSC chair Eric Buhain, majority of the 40 NSA heads said they would be forced to make drastic actions if nothing happens to their financial requests after the deadline.

Buhain himself set the March 15 deadline during his dialogue with the NSAs early in the week.

The PSC owes at least P15 million to the NSAs, which complained of non-payment of expenses as late as the 2002 Busan Asian Games.

The agency disburses funds to the NSAs for their development programs, including the athletes' foreign trips and tournament hostings. The PSC also takes care of the salaries of athletes and coaches recommended by their respective NSAs.

Sonny Lim of bodybuilding said he was satisfied with Buhain's explanation during their dialogue last Monday where at least 22 NSA heads showed up, including those who have asked for Buhain's ouster.

"We have showed the PSC good faith in holding our protest," said Lim, "and we have no choice but to wait for March 15. Otherwise, we will be hard-pressed to make a move because we don't want to be taken for a ride."

Buhain managed to defuse the explosive issue of financial support by telling the NSAs to "expect some changes by next month."

"I told them that they can't expect anything this month," said Buhain. "But by March, some of the NSAs will start getting their (PSC) financial assistance."

Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, who has openly supported the anti-Buhain sentiment, earlier said the NSAs only have two major concerns that need to be addressed: fund delay and the impending reduction of the national athletes' pool.

Buhain didn't make any commitment regarding the second problem although he promised to reduce the PSC workforce, particularly the contractuals who have reportedly grown to 400.

Black does a Bayno . . .

From page A25

signed coach, Aric del Rosario.

Heading the list are former España gunners Pido Jarencio and Bennet Palad, Fritz Gaston and Nel Parado, who steered Sunkist-UST to a respectable fourth-place finish in the recent PBL Platinum Cup.

Dong Vergeire, Del Rosario's longtime assistant, is out of the picture due to his commitment with the Cebuana-Lhuillier national squad.

Black is trying, in a very short time, to keep the Tigers in fighting form, despite a lineup lacking a legitimate slotman following the graduation of 6-foot-5 Alwyn Espiritu.

"I really don't know the team yet. I have no idea who are the big men, but I'm willing to help," said Black. He was assisted by coaches Lester del Rosario and Allan Ascue.

Ruddy Tan, UST team manager and general manager of Burlington, asked Black to help the Tigers.

Black is the main man behind the Burlington cage skills camp which will be held at the UST campus beginning March 1.

Hired by Toronto as its scout for Asia, Black said that he's joining the Raptors rookie camp in July, making it impossible for him to take over the coaching reins.

"No way, besides others are capable," said Black, whose do-or-die stance during his early years in the PBA made him very popular among local fans.

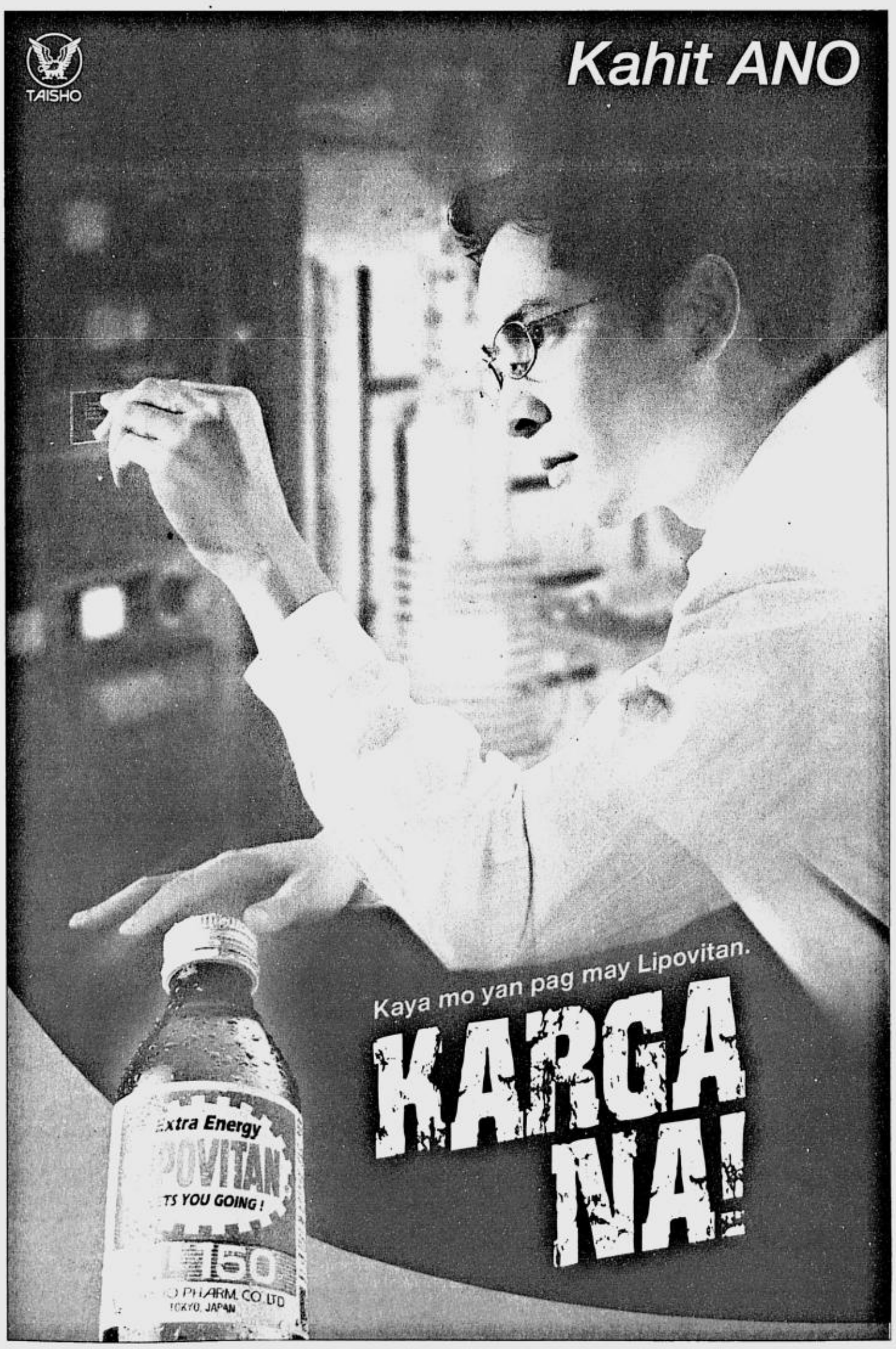
An INQUIRER source said Black will be tapped as UST consultant in the coming season.

Aside from running drills, Black is also expected to strengthen the mental resolve of the Tigers as they prepare to plunge into action in the tough UAAP wars.

"I can't comment yet on how this team will fare this season. I understand that there is no official lineup yet. UST also is in the process of looking for a head coach," Black said.

Among those present were stalwarts Christian Luanzon, Jemal Vizcarra and Rene de Guzman, who at 6-foot-3, battled 6-foot-5 guys in the shaded lane last year.

After the glory years of Udoy Belmonte, Bal David, Chris Cantonjos, Dennis Espino, Gido Babilonia and others, UST was relegated to the shadows by the UAAP's emerging powers, namely La Salle, which duplicated UST's feat from 1998-2001.



Buick gets Tiger on the prowl

LA JOLLA, California—Tiger Woods makes his return to the US PGA Tour here Thursday, trying to defend his title at the $4.8 million Buick Invitational and fight off a host of challengers for his top ranking.

Woods concluded his break from the game by watching Stanford University's last-second victory over rival Arizona last Saturday from a front-row seat. Woods held himself back from joining in a raucous celebration.

"When the ball went in, I went nuts and I took off to go jump on the pile, and I caught myself right around halfcourt and said, 'Better stop,'" said Woods, who played golf at Stanford from 1994 through 1996.

Woods has not played since the season-opening Tournament of Champions, but cannot afford to be rusty against such rivals as Fiji's Vijay Singh, who won the US PGA money title from Woods last year.

Singh is ranked second in the world to Woods and has 12 consecutive top-10 finishes, just two off the US PGA Tour record set by Jack Nicklaus in 1970.

"That's pretty impressive, isn't it?" Woods said.

"I think it's a fun time in golf right now because there are a lot of different challengers out there, and it's a lot of fun."

Woods has owned the top spot for more than 300 weeks. But Singh has won six titles to five for Woods since the 2002 Tour Championship.

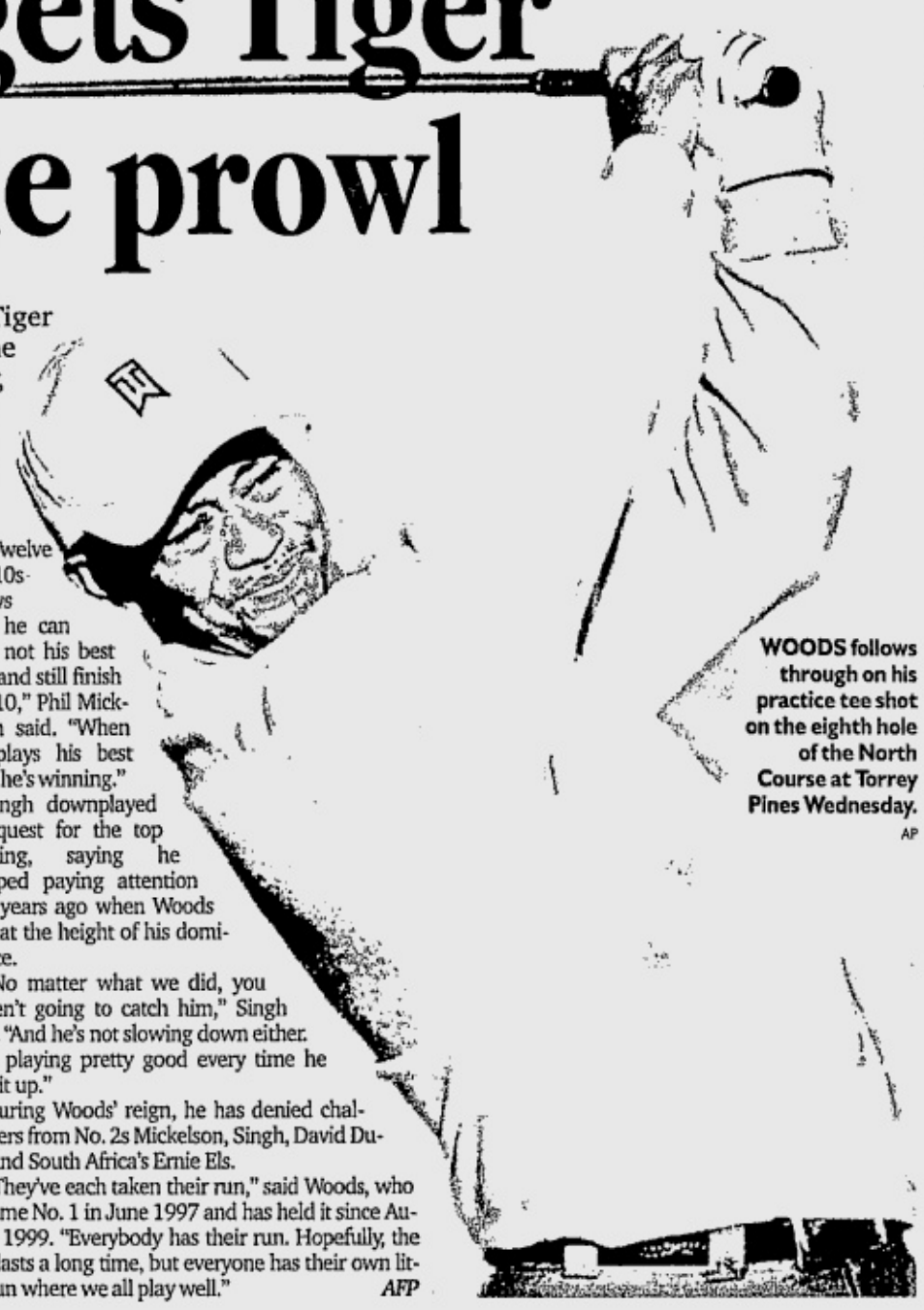
"Twelve top-10s shows that he can play not his best golf and still finish top 10," Phil Mickelson said. "When he plays his best golf, he's winning."

Singh downplayed his quest for the top ranking, saying he stopped paying attention two years ago when Woods was at the height of his dominance.

"No matter what we did, you weren't going to catch him," Singh said. "And he's not slowing down either. He's playing pretty good every time he tees it up."

During Woods' reign, he has denied challengers from No. 2s Mickelson, Singh, David Duval and South Africa's Ernie Els.

"They've each taken their run," said Woods, who became No. 1 in June 1997 and has held it since August 1999. "Everybody has their run. Hopefully, the run lasts a long time, but everyone has their own little run where we all play well." *AFP*



WOODS follows through on his practice tee shot on the eighth hole of the North Course at Torrey Pines Wednesday. AP

25 early teams in Uratex caddies roster

OVER 100 players from 25 teams coming from as far south as Davao City have registered so far for the P2-million 15th Uratex National Caddies Championship set Feb. 17-20 at the Executive course of the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo.

"We expect a field of 70 clubs in the next few days," tournament committee co-chairmen Col. Abe Villanueva and Manding Santos said yesterday. "Other clubs still have time to sign up."

The 72-hole tournament, bankrolled by the Cheng family, stakes handsome prizes in the form of gift certificates for the men's individual and team winners and ladies' champion.

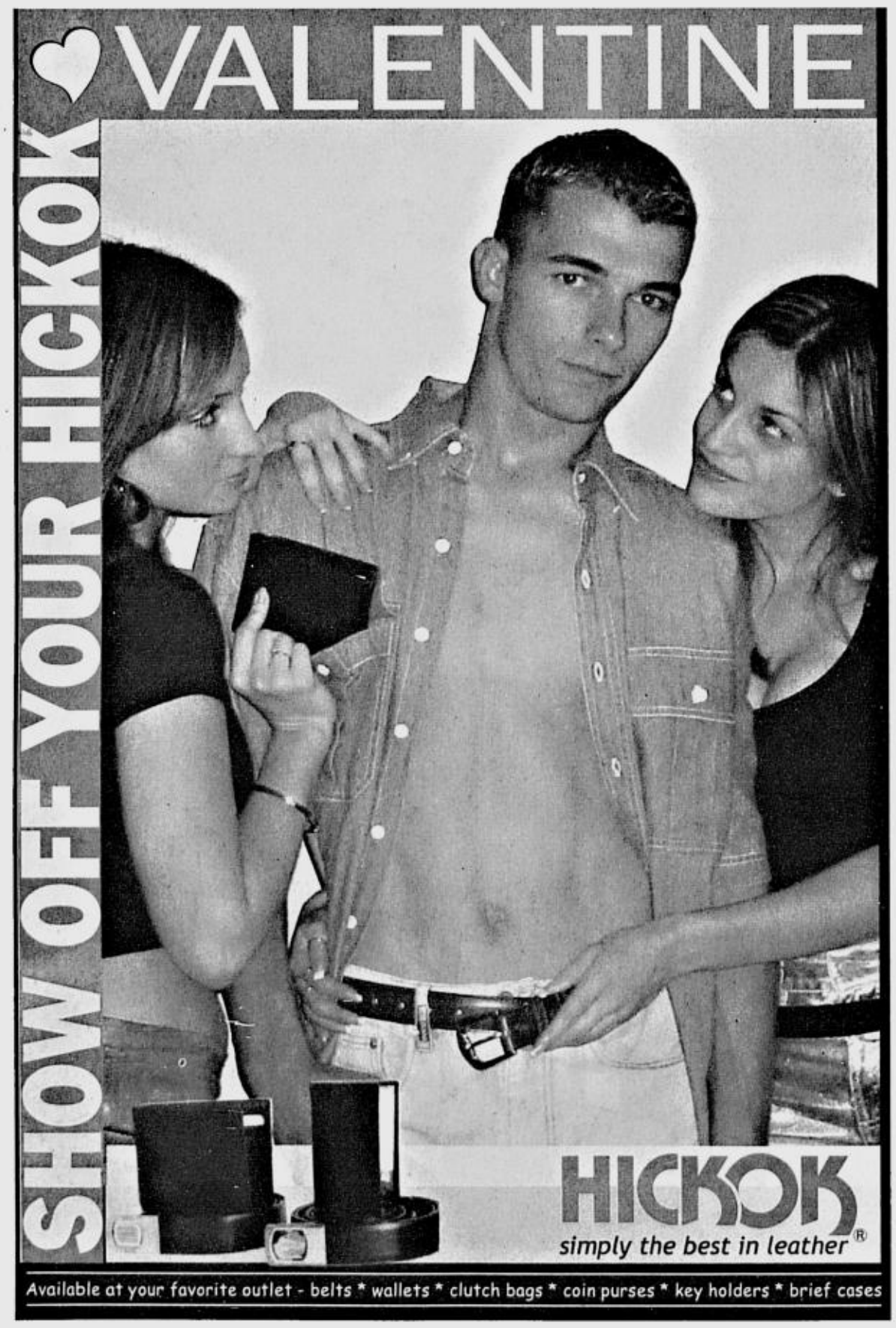
Valley president Manuel P. Quiogue said the Executive course is ready. "We have prepared it for the past few months and the caddies will again find it very challenging," he said.

Registration centers are at Valley (tel. 658-4901) through Lanie Aycardo and National Golf Association of the Philippines (521-1587) through NGAP executive director Jake Ayson.

Among the early clubs in the registry are Davao City's Apo, Lanang and Palos Verdes, Iloilo Golf Club in Panay, Manila Southwoods in Carmona, Cavite, and Mount Malarayat in Lipa City.

The traditional lecture by rulesman Taby Tabaniag will be held this Monday, followed by the hitting of the ceremonial drives the next day.

The late business tycoon Robert Go Cheng started this unique tournament in 1988 to provide a national event for local caddies, develop their skills and discover talent from their ranks.



Inner Wheel golf up

HUNDREDS of players from around the country are expected on the first tee today when the Inner Wheel Clubs of the Philippines Inc., composed of wives of Rotarians, holds their 4th National President's Cup Golf Tournament at the Alabang Golf and Country Club.

Gloria "Baby" Golez, this year's National Conference chair, said the tournament kicks off the club's activities before its 38th National Conference at the Manila Hotel starting Sunday.

Sports chair Baby Santos and golf committee head Nanette Qua said they expect the tournament to build up fellowship and camaraderie among members.

Tee-off time is from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. The entry fee is P2,000.

Prizes in kind are at stake courtesy of, among others, Ametron Inc., FedEx, Export Industry Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, GNC, KPMG Laya Mananghaya & Co., Nestle Philippines, Aida Vera Cruz, Baby Golez, Tina Carlos, Ato & DC Vicky Magadia, Nanette Qua, Thelma Ortiz, Gen. Antonio Abaya, DC Sofie Lee, Consolidated Industrial Gas Inc., Malayan Insurance, Yakult Phils., Data Services Phils., SV Montessori, Rey Villafuerte, Johnny & Liza Elorde, May Neri, Jasmin & Boy Kahyeng, Joey & Liny Sy, Tito and Baby Santos, Daisy Concepcion, Jeatte Palabrica, Nitz Santos, Martha Pineda, Naty dela Cruz, PP Paul Chua, Elena Ngo, Vivian Sagsagat and Maribel Calma.

SPORTSWATCH

Paguyo stuns Panis, reaches semis

FLEET-FOOTED veteran Josephine Paguyo upset fourth seed Michelle Panis, 7-6, 6-2, to barge into the singles semifinals of the 2004 Hotel Emelie All-Women's Tennis Open yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Paguyo, the 1996 World Cup soft tennis bronze medalist, displayed nerves of steel in the crucial first-set tiebreak which she took, 7-4. The left-hander then cruised to victory and booked a last-four encounter with top seed Tracy Santos, who ousted Ivy de Castro, 6-2, 6-4. The bottom half of the draw pits second pick Czarina Mae Arevalo against No. 3 Bien Zoleta in the netfest organized in cooperation with Avon Beauty Products, Milo, adidas, Wilson balls and the Philippine Sports Commission and sanctioned by the Philippine Tennis Association. Arevalo blanked age-grouper Nikki Manalo, 6-0, 6-0, while Zoleta routed Deena Rose Cruz, 6-0, 6-2.

Lhuillier reaffirms support for tennis

PHILIPPINE Davis Cup team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier says he will continue to support local tennis despite the nationals' recent 4-1 defeat to China in the Asia-Ocenia Zone Group II Davis Cup tie last week. Lhuillier said the Filipinos' Cup outing served as a learning experience for them and a wake-up call for tennis officials and sport patrons. "Our players have the skills and our boys played their best. I am proud to have been team manager of this team. We cannot deny, though, that the Chinese are the more fundamentally sound players," said Lhuillier. "There is no substitute for a long-term training program and international exposure." The Philippines salvaged a measure of pride when the country's No.1 Johnny Arcilla, who took local tennis by storm last year by winning nine titles including a sweep of the four-leg Cebuana Lhuillier Tennis Circuit, won his second singles match against Li Jingyi. One of the standouts during the Cebuana Lhuillier Tennis Circuit was 18-year-old PJ Tierro who was sent to a two-month training with the legendary Pat Cash in Australia last year. The 6-foot-1 player from Olongapo will again be sent by Cebuana Lhuillier to Europe this May for a stint in a club league.

Rodrigo off for Oriental title crack

WITH the odds stacked against him, Philippine flyweight champion Edgar Rodrigo travels to enemy territory today to try to snatch the Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation 112-lb title of Japan's Noriyuki Komatsu. The southpaw Rodrigo, 24, leaves at 4 p.m. on a Thai Airways flight with promoter Lope Sarreal Jr. and Filipino judge Nick Giongco for Osaka, Japan where the Filipino will be challenging Komatsu for the championship this Sunday. It is the first fight for Rodrigo (9-2-3, 4 KOs) since earning instant celebrity status after knocking out Cebu's Z Gorres last year to win the RP flyweight crown. "Talagang dehado si Rodrigo sa laban na ito (Rodrigo is a decided underdog in this fight)," said Sarreal. The unbeaten Komatsu, ranked No. 3 by the World Boxing Council, has 17 wins (8 KOs) and five draws. Last year, he knocked out PABA champ Rolly Lunas in just two rounds. But the General Santos City-raised Rodrigo said he's ready to take on Komatsu. "I have prepared like never before for this fight," said Rodrigo. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

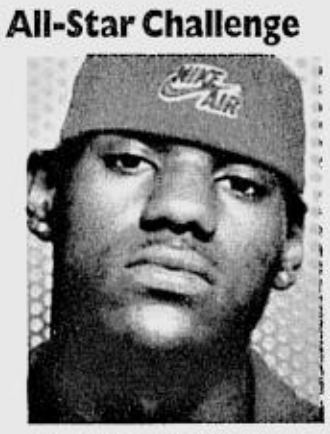
Tañamor headlines Sta. Maria boxfest

TWELVE bouts, featuring Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Harry Tañamor and three women's fights, mark the resumption of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) Go for Gold program which visits Sta. Maria, Bulacan, this Friday. Hosted by Mayor Omeng Ramos, the bouts will be held at the town plaza to coincide with the celebration of the Sta. Maria town fiesta starting at 6 p.m. and will be aired on NBN-4 every Saturday at 9:15 p.m.-10:45 p.m. Tañamor, campaigning in the light-flyweight division, tangles in the first bout with Lhyven Salazar.

CHAMP MOM: Menchie Francisco-Ramirez of the Summer's Eve Racing Team shares a light moment with father-in-law and legendary race driver Pocholo Ramirez during the recent Goodyear Ducaro Enduro at the Subic International Raceway. The 46-year-old mother of three, who finished second in the rookie class and 8th overall, is sponsored by Summer's Eve, the US-made feminine hygiene product.

All eyes on James in All-Star Challenge

CLEVELAND Cavaliers' young superstar LeBron James leads a team of fellow rookies in the 2004 "got milk? Rookie Challenge" during the NBA All-Stars weekend against the Yao Ming-led Sophomore team. James has started in all the games he has played for the Cavs and averages 20.8 points, 5.9 rebounds and 5.9 assists a game. In game on Feb. 1 against the Washington Wizards, James scored a career-high 38 points. After 44 games, he ranks No.13 in the NBA in scoring (20.8 ppg), No. 5 in minutes played (40.2), No. 12 in assists (5.9 a game) and leads the race for this season's Rookie of the Year. For more information on James and his brand of basketball, log on to www.nikebasketball.com.ph



JAMES: Leads rookies team

Pasay 4-cocker under way tonight

BIG-TIME cockfighting action rages anew starting at 7 tonight in the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 4-Cock Derby series at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. The 50-fight program is sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Comlexor 3000. The PCCA derby series is one of Pasay Cockpit's biggest crowd-drawers, according to pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric de la Rosa and Butchoy Olano. On March 15, 17 and 19, the P1 million Challenge to Champions 7-Cock Derby will be presented by PCCA and is open to all cockers and breeders for an entry fee of P8,800. Reservation for cockhouses has started and interested parties may call 816-6750, 843-1746 and 843-1890. Meanwhile, the P300,000 ASF 4-Cock Derby is slated on Feb. 20 with the ASF Group of Laguna as host. Entry fee is P10,000.

Lim: BAP can do it . . .

From page A26

others, synchronized it with the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) to make room for the national team in future international campaigns.

"At best, we could ask them (PBA) to lend their players for the ABC or Asian Games, but we would strongly discourage the PBA from handling the affairs of the national team," said Lim.

But PBA Commissioner Noli Eala said the league would want nothing less than direct involvement in the national team's operations when it comes to the Asian Games or the ABC.

"It's sad if the PBA wouldn't be allowed to handle the national team. But if that's their (BAP) decision, we will abide by it," said Eala.

"They are the recognized body of the Fiba in the country and the PBA respects that," he added.

Eala, however, stressed that everything is still up in the air since the BAP is in the thick of a power struggle against Nic Jorge's Bapi.

"As soon as the problem between the BAP and the Bapi is over, we will immediately sit down with the recognized body and talk about what the PBA could offer to the national team," said Eala.

6-9 Eman eyed for nat'l pool

By Roy Luarca

DAVAO City—Towering Samigue Eman will be invited back to the Philippine team while three other promising local players will be given the chance to gain national recognition at the conclusion of the RP-Cebuana Lhuillier "Tryouts ng Bayan" at the Almendras Gym.

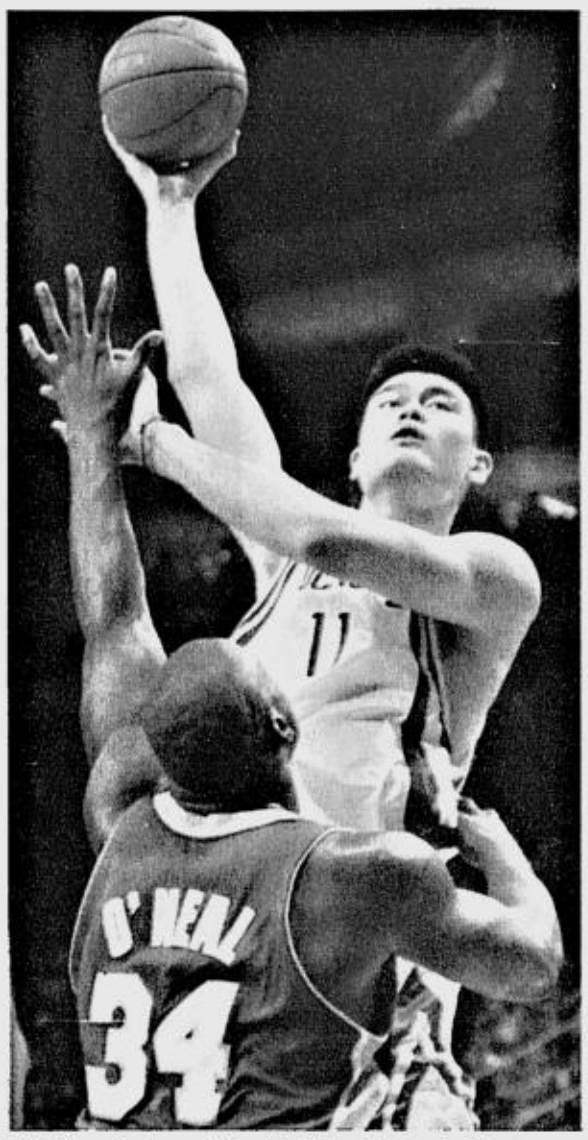
The 21-year-old 6-foot-9 Eman, who has played for John O in the Philippine Basketball League and been a part of the national pool, is being eyed by national coaches Dong Vergeire and Boyzie Zamar to reinforce the depleted middle of the RP team.

Also to receive invitation are Louie Medalla and Eder John Saldua, Eman's teammates at the University of Mindanao, and John Ric Lumbatan of the University of Southern Philippines.

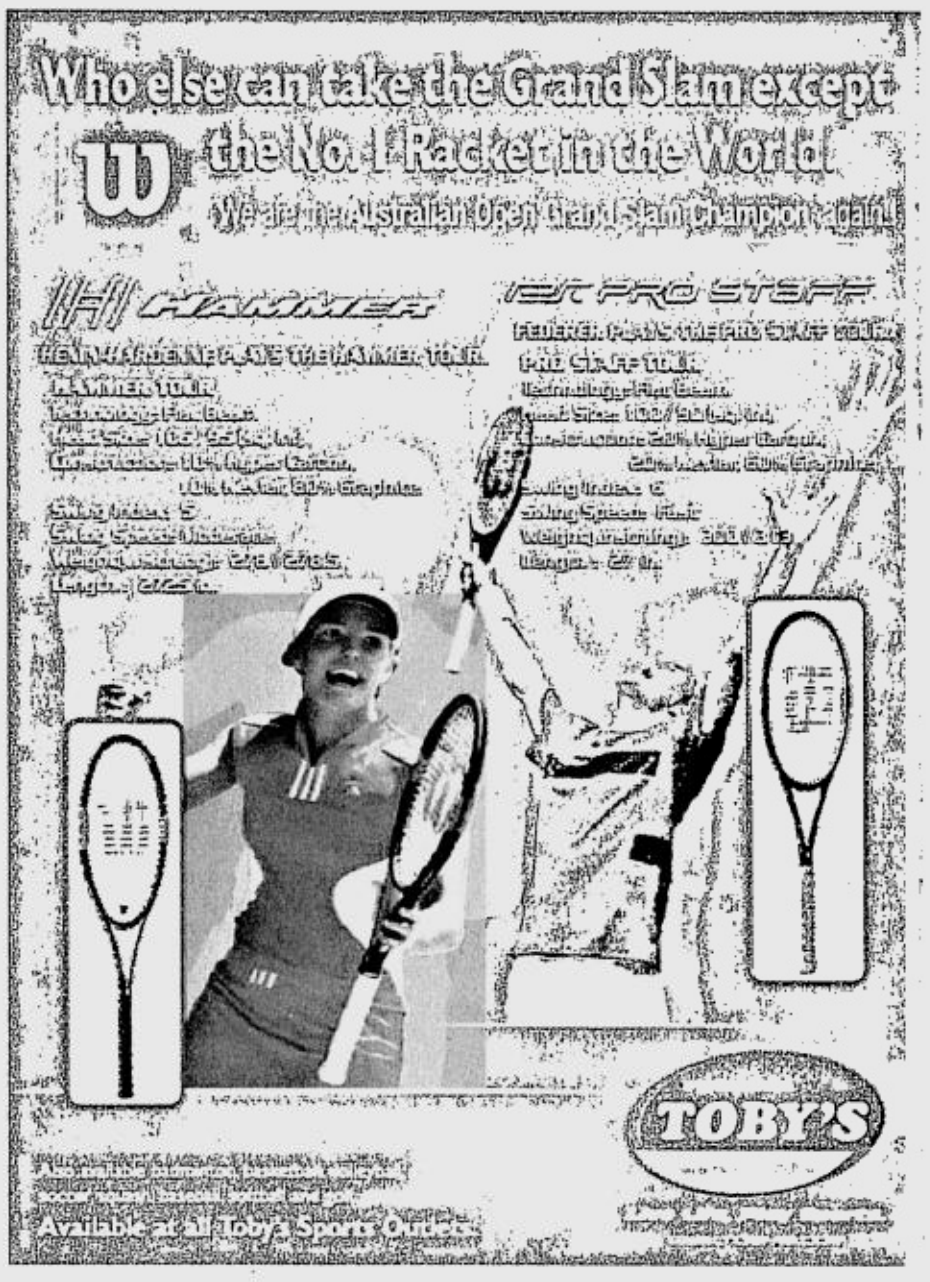
Medalla is a 5-foot-10 point guard while Saldua is a 6-3 off guard. Lumbatan, who is just 17, stands 6-1 and plays forward.

They will join four invitees from Cagayan de Oro City, where the two-month, city-hopping tryouts, conceptualized by Philippine men's team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier, AVP and GM of Cebuana Lhuillier, started.

Ricardo Cawaling Jr. and Julian Bagare, both 16, have been invited to play for Benedictine International School by its coach Beaujing Acot, who's assisting in the tryouts with Arsenio Dysangco.



YAO Ming shoots over Shaquille O'Neal during the Houston-Los Angeles game Wednesday. The Rockets won, 102-87. AP



NBA ROUNDUP

Kobe reactivated from injured list

BRYANT

NEW YORK—Kobe Bryant was taken off the injured list by the Los Angeles Lakers Wednesday after missing seven games because of a cut on his right index finger.

Bryant said he received the injury when he accidentally put his hand through a glass window while trying to move boxes in his garage last month.

The All-Star guard has missed 14 of the team's 49 games this season with a variety of injuries, including a sprained right shoulder and a sore right knee. *Reuters*

Nets coach Frank matches win mark

NEW YORK—Interim coach Lawrence Frank tied an NBA record after the New Jersey Nets downed the host Cleveland Cavaliers, 105-85, Wednesday.

Frank, 33, the youngest coach in professional US sports, took his Nets streak to 9-0 to equal the best start to a coaching career with Kurt Rambis (Los Angeles, 1998-99) and Buddy Jeannette (Baltimore, 1947-48).

"The players deserve all the credit," Frank told reporters. The Nets are on a 10-game winning streak.

New Jersey is only the second team in NBA history to win 10 straight games by 10 points or more, tying the mark set by coach Red Auerbach's 1946-47 Washington Capitals.

The Nets tied a team record with their fifth successive road victory and also moved within one of their longest winning streak, having reeled off 11 in a row in 1982-83. *AP*

Thomas penalized for head-butting

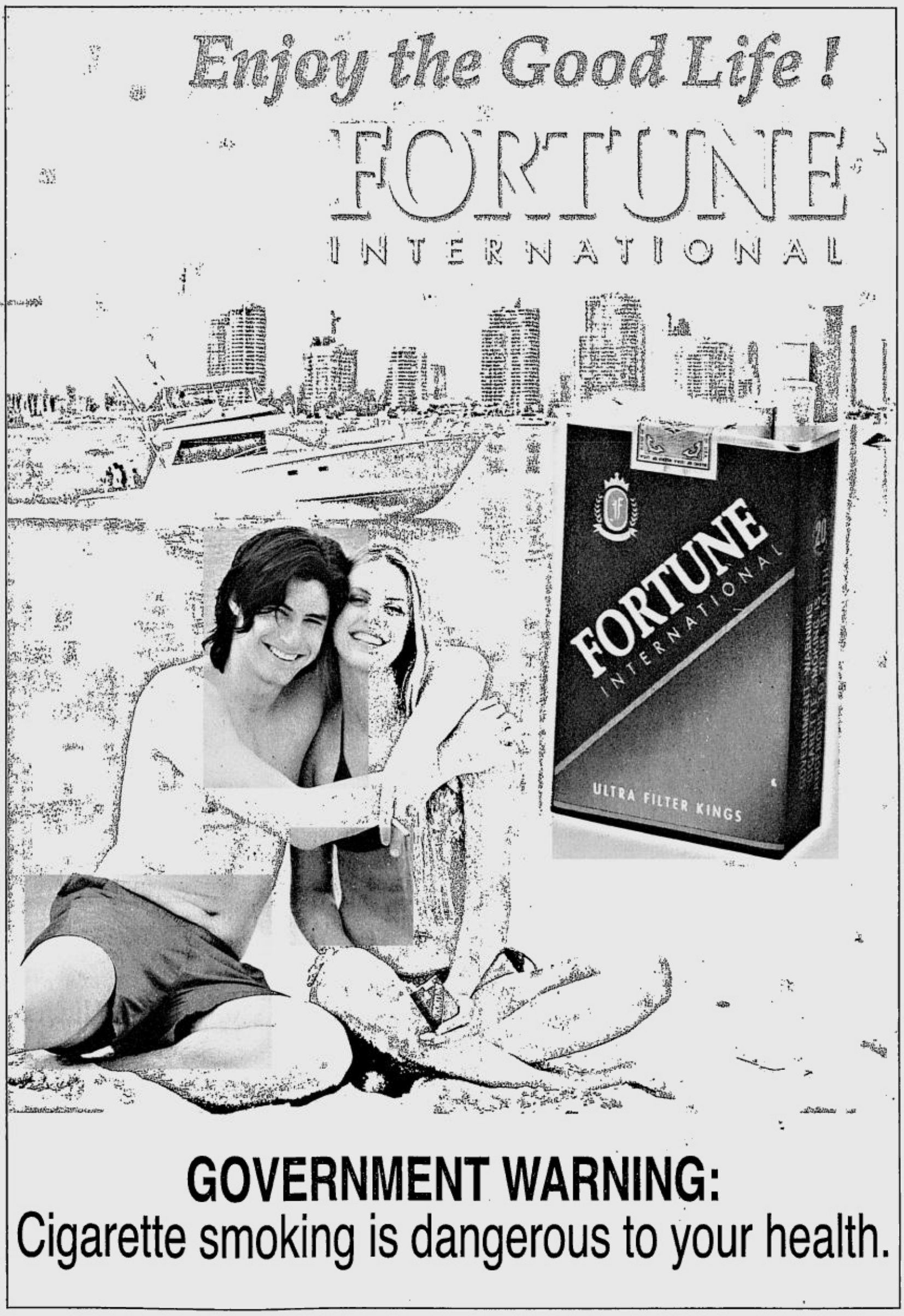
NEW YORK—Knicks forward Kurt Thomas was suspended for one game without pay by the NBA on Wednesday for head-butting Mavericks forward Josh Howard.

Thomas tangled with Howard midway through the second quarter of Dallas' 105-90 victory on Tuesday. Thomas was to serve his suspension during the Knicks' game at New Orleans on Wednesday. *AP*

OTHER NBA results: Sacramento 96, Detroit 94; Miami 111, Orlando 98; Philadelphia 113, Washington 88; New Orleans 106, New York 98; Memphis 110, LA Clippers 102; Minnesota 77, Utah 66; Golden State 110, Phoenix 99.

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Magic Dave 2. Super Kiss 3. Day Break 4. The Virginian 5. Macho Guwapito
Race 2—1. Boogie Shoes 2. Beat D Heat 3. Winning Prize 4. Grande Ecole 5. Magic Ewan Ko
Race 3—1. American Dame 2. Union Square 3. Revolting 4. Suonos 5. Harry's Up
Race 4—1. Speed Mountain 2. Lucky Fil 3. Spirited Lady 4. Ceasar's Inn
Race 5—1. Adam's Call 2. Conquer D Sun 3. L'Islet Sur Mer 4. Maria Makiling 5. Throttle
Race 6—1. Trail Blazer 2. Pirouette 3. Cause of Our Joy
Race 7—1. Dreams of Flame 2. Ganda 3. Color of the Wind 4. Good Quality 5. Memory Lane
Race 8—1. Success Story 2. Power Pack 3. Patikim 4. Priceless Gem
Race 9—1. Blitzkrieg 2. Real Material 3. Romario 4. Worth Ur While 5. Doctor Steve 6. Long Hitter



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abba clones promise to sound, look like original Swedish group

By Marinel R. Cruz

ABBA The Music is in Manila for a two-night concert, but Abba, the '70s band, is not.

Original band members of the Swedish group that popularized such hits as "Dancing Queen" and "Winner Takes It All" have been replaced by Abba "clones."

This phenomenon of replacing the originals with look-alike versions first happened in the '80s, when a musical called Beatlemania came here to Manila for a series of shows that featured four men who looked like the Fab 4 from Liverpool and played their music.

But members of Abba The Music said they were "in direct contact" with the management of the original Abba band. They claimed that they are the only Abba clones permitted to perform and look exactly like the real Swedish pop quartet.

Kenneth Svoldgaard, the group's assistant manager, said the Abba management, which is based in Stockholm, Sweden, authorized the use of Abba The Music as the band's official name.

The band, however, admitted that none of the original Abba members—Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson, Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad—have seen their clones perform.

"They never go to concerts, because if they do, they get mobbed. So they send someone who works for their company to watch us," said Kenneth in a media gathering last Wednesday at the Discovery Suite in Pasig City.

"This woman does everything for them, like go to concerts, watch musicals, etc. She saw the group perform in December and said she really enjoyed the show," he added.

Abba The Music, composed of Katja Nord, Camilla Dahlin, Martin Hakansson and Johan Löfgren, will have shows on Feb. 13 at 8:30 p.m. at the Waterfront in Cebu City, and on Feb. 14 at 8:30 p.m. at the PSC-Ultra in Pasig City.

During their two-night concert, Abba The Music will be performing along with some of the members of the original Abba back-up band.

"They said they enjoy playing with us because they feel that we are so much like the original," said Katja. "It's flattering. A lot of groups try to do Abba but I guess nobody does them as good as we do."

Katja said it is very important for them to sing exactly how Abba had sang.

"There will be no cheating. We feel that we have this great responsibility to sound exactly like Abba," she said. "I guess the fact that we are from Sweden also helps. We have the right accent while singing."

According to Kenneth, the costumes that Abba The Music wore during their concerts were made to look exactly like the clothes the original Abba members wore.

"Even the buttons have the same color combination," he said.

Camilla and Katja are members of a group called Waterloo, which was formed seven years ago. They are winners of a talent search in Sweden called "Reach for the Stars."

"It's a very popular TV show where you dress up and act like a famous person," explained Martin. "The girls did Abba and they won."

Before forming Abba The Music three years ago, Camilla and Katja were back-up vocalists to several pop stars in Sweden. Katja said they also recorded a children's album a few years ago.

Camilla was 11 years old when she appeared in the music video of "Thank You for the Music," according to Katja. "She was there singing with the real Abba."

She and Camilla have been listening to Abba's music since they were 9 years old, Camilla said.

"The Abba is our idol. It's so natural for us to sing their songs because these songs are close to our hearts," she added.

On Valentine's Day, Abba The Music will try to look and sound like the original Abba in songs like "Thank You for the Music," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "Fernando," "Take A Chance On Me," "Chiquitita," "The Name of the Game" among others.

Performing with them are Pinky Marquez and Bimbo Cerudo.

"Expect us to give a great performance out here," said Martin. "We were told that Abba's music is still very popular here in the Philippines. We will try to give a performance that is as identical to Abba's as possible."

If only for the music, Abba The Music might be worth watching.

ABBA clones Katja Nord (right) and Camilla Dahlin arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Wednesday for two shows in the country. ROGER MARGALLO

'Simpsons' The Movie now in the works

LOS ANGELES—Homer, Bart and the zany cast of the hit animated television series "The Simpsons" could finally become Hollywood stars, with plans for a big-screen version of their antics in the offing.

The industry press said Wednesday the creators of the show, now in its 15th year and poised to become the longest-running sitcom in US history next year, were working on a "Simpsons" feature film for Twentieth Century Fox studios.

Writers and creators Matt Groening and James Brooks are leading a team of writers in developing a full-length screenplay, while the studio has already hired key writers, Daily Variety said.

Twentieth Century Fox, owned by Rupert Murdoch, whose Fox television channel runs the "Simpsons" series, said it was "very excited about the possibility of making a 'Simpsons' movie."

"However, we are in the very early stages of developing an idea for the movie," said the studio's animation chief, Chris Meledandri.

Variety said that at least seven past and present writers of "The Simpsons" were involved in the movie.

Plans for a big-screen feature version of the globally syndicated "Simpsons" have been talked about in Hollywood for more than a decade, but Groening and his team have been very careful about over-exploiting the super-successful franchise, Variety said.

One of the show's writers, Mike Reiss, told DVDFanatic.com that the final impetus for launching the world's most famous animated dysfunctional family onto the silver screen came from the studio.

"They've wanted to do this since season two. It's been 13 years of wanting to do the 'Simpsons' movie," Reiss said.

"Finally Fox said, 'Let's just do it!' We never had the greatest idea that was compelling, but Fox said, 'Maybe if we start paying you, you'll get inspired.' And sure enough, it worked!"

Variety said no release schedule had yet been set for the planned movie but that it was likely to be at least two years before it enters movie theaters.

Its more than 300 episodes have frequently caused outrage, including one infamous episode portraying adoption and poverty in Brazil that prompted a protest from the city of Rio de Janeiro, which threatened to sue.

Other barbs have included cultural and religious jabs, political jibes, pokes at industrialists and rampant capitalism, swipes at top sports personalities and more than the occasional attack on the French, who were dubbed "cheese-eating surrender monkeys" by one of the show's characters. *AFP*

'Wish Ko Lang' has new host

From page A32

ing (the show). We needed someone to go with us, so Vicky went with us."

Bernadette's contract with GMA 7 will end on Feb. 15. But her last episode for "Wish" was aired last Saturday.

An extra episode would have been about Bernadette turning over the show to Vicky.

"But we decided to cancel it," said Esguerra. "It would have been better if she stuck out with 'Probe,' which is in a way an extension of the GMA 7 family. But we learned that she was moving to ABS-CBN and would do a show similar to 'Wish.'"

Bernadette promised in a text message to Inquirer Entertainment that she would grant an interview "at the proper time."

The "Wish Ko Lang Goes to Europe," a special edition of the show, will be aired in March. Features will include the reunion of a father and a son in Paris, where the former has been living after they separated years ago, and a group of Filipino-British youth, who had collected thousands of toys to be distributed to their less fortunate counterparts in Metro Manila.

On Saturday, the stories will revolve around love.

SEMBRANO

Vicky, said Esguerra, had always been in their minds even at the time they were conceptualizing the show.

"But at that time she was starting out with 'I-Witness' and she couldn't afford to have another show. She just got married then, too," he explained.

When they offered "Wish" again to Vicky, she had been more receptive and asked for one night to decide.

"When I reassured my husband that our family remains to be my top priority, he agreed right away," said Vicky.

"Personally, I felt that I was ready for another challenge. And 'Wish' was it."

There was no adjustment period between the staff and their new host.

"She instantly blended with everybody," said Esguerra. "Her personality will definitely mold the show. Her advocacy on missing persons will give the show a different approach. The show will also report the development of Vicky's own wish, that is for her and her husband to finally have a child."

Willie Nep serves politics for Valentine's Day dinner

FORMER president Joseph Estrada tried to keep comedian Willie Nepomuceno from impersonating him, but the comedian was undeterred.

Willie said he simply shrugged his shoulder and carried on with what he does best—to mimic popular people like the deposed president.

"Erap said he didn't want people to make fun of him. *Hindi daw nya gusto ang mga birada ko sa kanya* (He said he didn't like how I poked fun at him)," Willie said of the deposed president, who was San Juan mayor at the time of the incident. "I told him he shouldn't be too sensitive because he's a public figure.

"In a way, other people learn more about Erap through me so I didn't stop," Willie told Inquirer Entertainment. "I can't remember how the talk ended but I never heard a complaint from him again. I guess Erap appreciates it now."

Willie, who is seen weekly in the sitcom "Ispup" on ABC 5, prides himself of being a disciplined and respectful impersonator.

"It's a job. But we impersonators are not here just to earn. We have a responsibility to our audience," he said.

But just like any other job, being an impersonator has its risks, according to Willie. The comedian recounted the time when action star Robin Padilla threatened to file a libel suit against him in 1995.

Robin was convicted for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and was sentenced to 17 to 21 years in 1995. The court granted him conditional pardon in 1998.

"Robin said it wasn't about my jokes, but how I portrayed him. I went up the stage with my hands bound by cuffs," Willie recalled. "Fortunately, (lawyer and former TV host) Joe Quirino, who was an Ilocano like Robin, intervened. Everything was patched up. It got settled without me having to talk with Robin."

He said impersonators must be careful to always stick to the issues.

"Research on your subjects. Try to dig deeper into to their lives to understand them more," Willie stressed. "Never talk about their physical deformities. You must at least be sensitive about that."

The comedian said this is also why he does not impersonate women, except for former First Lady Imelda Marcos and former Commission on Elections Chief Haydee Yorac.

"I really studied the characters well," he said. "I was really very careful not to offend the women. I treat my subjects well. I don't ridicule them."

Willie also impersonated former First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos, "but only for a commercial where I have control of the shots."

When Corazon Aquino was president, Willie tried to impersonate her nemeses instead.

Today at the Music Museum, people will get to see Willie impersonating presidential candidates Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Raul Rocco and his friend Fernando Poe Jr. in a show titled, "Willie Nep for President, One Vote, Take All."

Joining Willy on stage are Ate Glow and radio commentator Kaye Dacer of "Usapang De Kampanilya" and "Aksyon Ngayon" fame.

"This is a political thing," Willie said of his show. "I've always been associated with political satire. The audience can except none of the sappy love songs from other Valentine shows." *Marinel R. Cruz*

WILLIE Nep: Impersonating people is just a job. But we have a responsibility to our audience.

Busy month for film buffs

From page A31

Filipino songs about love.

Political satires

AFTER the very funny "Electile Dysfunction" at the Republic of Malate and Music Museum, two new political satires are regaling elections-savvy (and even -crazy) Filipinos.

At the Music Museum tonight, the country's top impersonator, **Willie Nepomuceno**, topbills "Willie Nep for President: Buy One Take All." Expect Willie to poke pointed fun at a host of presidents and presidential wannabes, from **Ferdinand Marcos** to FPJ. Joining him onstage are **Ate Glow** and **Kaye Dacer**.

Willie excels at the craft and art of impersonation because he does a lot of research and spends many hours to get his subjects' looks, voices and mannerisms just right.

Even better, he goes beyond simple mimicry and captures his subjects' "souls," so to speak. The fact that he used to be an activist and remains politically involved makes his impersonations all the more telling and insightful.

Last Feb. 12, the similarly politically astute Apo Hiking Society (**Jim Paredes, Boboy Garrovillo** and **Danny Javier**) teamed up with **Jon Santos** and Nyoy Volante in "Polling in Love: APOlitically Incorrect Valentine" at the AFP Theater.

Billed as "a hilarious prelude to the expected exciting milestone that is the May 2004 presidential elections," the show had Jim posing as FPJ, Danny as **Ping Lacson**, Boboy as **Raul Roco**, Jon as PGMA, and Nyoy as Mr. Suave, the 2004 version of the Pinoy voter.

We hope that the show will have more performances before the May 10 polls, with a new title and updated references. The Apo are famous for their political satire from the Marcos years onward, and have gotten a lot of praise for their satirical shows' unusual combination of wit, insight and courage.

Café de Malate celebrates Year of the Monkey

CAFÉ de Malate celebrates the Year of the Monkey with special shows featuring several performers.

Apple Alindogan sings every Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, it's Cindy Rosas' turn to captivate the crowd with her repertoire of pop and standard songs.

Gem Ramos gets everybody to dance on Thursdays. Nina Sanchez and Devvie Honig perform back to back on Fridays.

Café de Malate on Madre Ignacia Street in Malate offers 50-percent discount during happy hour on Saturdays.

A favorite watering hole that has survived the trends of comedy clubs and gay humor, Café de Malate has become a Manila institution catering to the after-work crowd in the city. Simple but sumptuous food and superb service are the other main attractions of the place.

Kuh opens Hacienda Isabella for V-day

SHOW TIME

KUH Ledesma's Hacienda Isabella—a property in Tagaytay which the pop diva plans to develop into a country club—will be open for Valentine's Day.

Couples who want something different (other than the usual concert and dinner) can hie off to Hacienda Isabella for a country dinner under the skies on Feb. 14.

Only an hour and a half away from Manila, Hacienda Isabella was originally intended by Kuh to be a retreat house and a bed-and-breakfast getaway for bored city dwellers. Recently, she decided to open it to the public for weddings, debuts, birthday parties and other such gatherings.

"This place is so beautiful, I wanted to share it with the public," says the pop diva who named the place after her only daughter.

Hacienda Isabella is also envisioned to be a performance venue. On March 20, Kuh will be staging a concert inspired by Barbra Streisand's "One Voice" show, which was held at Streisand's former Malibu estate on Sept. 6, 1986. She will be joined by her daughter Isabella and up-and-coming singer Rebekah. Kuh also plans to invite other artists to stage shows there.

The property consists of a main house and two pavilions. Other areas, which will include a swimming pool, a library, a game room and other amenities, are currently under construction.

For details, call Headline Concepts at 551-7253 to 55.

Busy month for film buffs

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FEBRUARY is a big month for film buffs who have a number of special events to avail of. The 11th Pelikula at Lipunan film fest opened last Feb. 11 at SM Megamall. Today's treats include **Eddie Romero**'s "Banta ng Kahapon" with **Vic Vargas** at 3 p.m., **Jon Red**'s "Astig" with **Robin Padilla** at 6:30 p.m., and the documentary "Pinoi Rock and Rhythm" at 9 p.m.

On Feb. 14, **Anthony Minghella**'s "Cold Mountain" will be screened at 9 p.m. On Feb. 15, **Ditsi Carolino**'s acclaimed "Riles" will be shown at 3 p.m., **Nick de Ocampo**'s "Edades" at 6:30 p.m., and "Zamboanga," **Eduardo de Castro**'s 1937 film starring **Fernando Poe (Sr.)** and **Rosa del Rosario** at 9 p.m.

At the NCCA, this year's Cinema Paradiso festival concentrates on romantic films and Filipino love teams through the years. Last year's Cinema Paradiso was a surprise hit and proved that there's an audience for our "old" films, the best of which have withstood the vagaries of time.

It's unfortunate that this year's festival was accused of "politicking" with its inclusion of an FPJ starrer. The charge is ludicrous because the festival is held in a small theater at the NCCA building, so the political impact of any single movie in its lineup would be exceedingly minimal.

In any case, that teapot tempest has subsided, so let's just enjoy this year's treats, shall we?

The mainstream theater circuit also deserves our attention this month, because it's finally showing some of the movies up for awards at the Oscars on Feb. 29.

They include "Cold Mountain," "21 Grams," "The Last Samurai," "Seabiscuit" "The Return of the King" and "Something's Gotta Give."

'Love, Actually'

THE BRITISH Council is holding a musical soiree at 6 p.m. today at the second floor Activity Center of The Podium. The event features romantic poetry interpreted by **Roselyn Zaldivar-Perez, Michelle Gallaga-Trinidad, Lance Raymundo** and **Jake Macapagal**, with music by **Bobby Gomez** and **Holly Angel Paraiso**, and direction by **Angie Magbanua**.

Spanish film fest

ONGOING until Feb. 15 at Greenbelt 1 Art Film is Instituto Cervantes' 2004 Spanish Film Festival showcasing "El Perro del Hortelano," "Juana La Loca," "La Buena Estella," "Una Historia de Entonces" and "Sin Verguenza." Call 817-5670.

'Acoustic Hearts'

NYOY Volante and **Mannos** perform in a free Valentine concert, "Acoustic Hearts," at 6 p.m. today at Eastwood Park in Libis, Q.C.

Gawad CCP

THE FOUR-DAY Gawad CCP Independent Film and Video Competition and Festival ends today, with entries being screened starting at 9:30 a.m. at the CCP's Dream Theater. Awarding ceremonies will be held tonight at the Main Theater lobby. Call 832-1125 local 1704.

At Discovery Suites

ON FEB. 13, guitarist **Mike Austria** performs at Café Berrio, Dream Sequence plays at the Columbus room, and **Dominic** and **Burton** sing at the Serendipity lounge.

'Aspects of Love'

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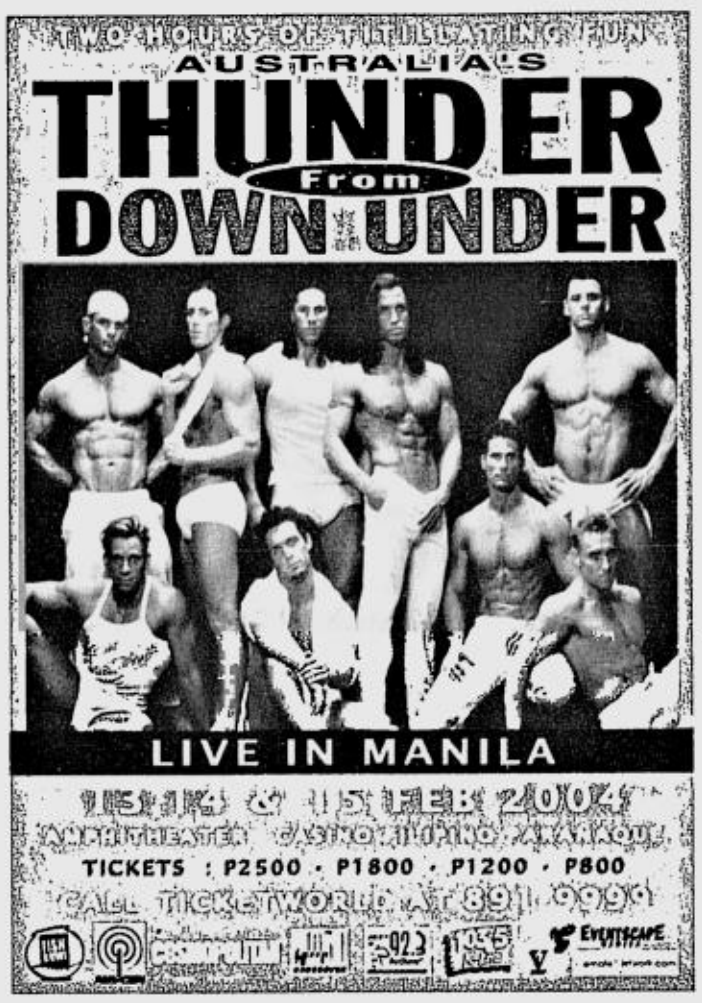

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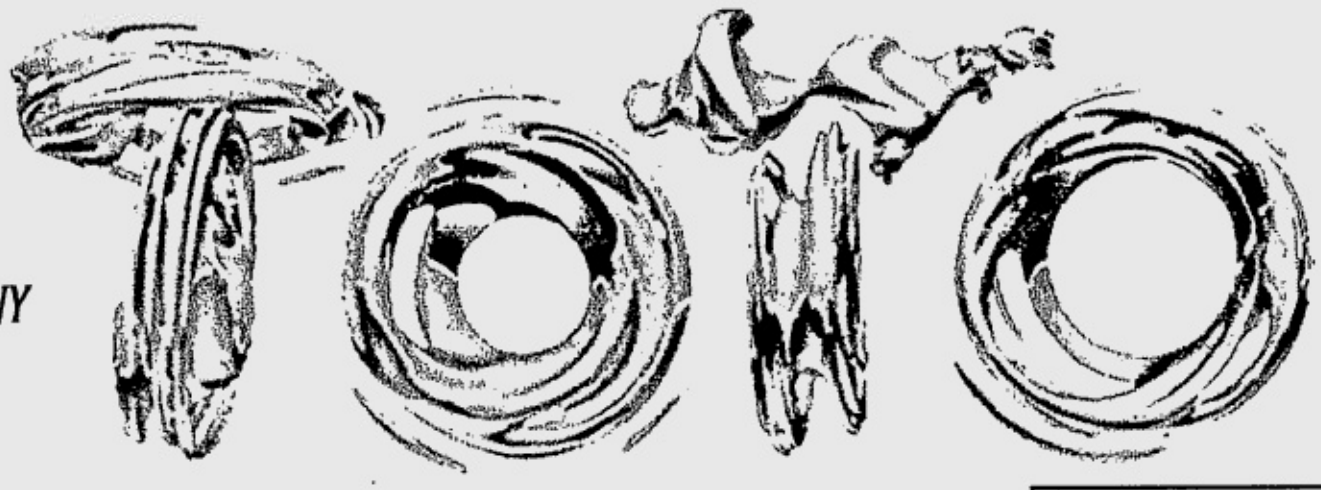

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Editor Louie C. Camino

'Wish Ko Lang' has new host in Vicky Morales

Bernadette Sembrano in similar show on ABS

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

STARTING tomorrow, GMA 7's "Wish Ko Lang" will have a new fairy godmother.

Vicky Morales takes over the role of granting lucky viewers' wishes from fellow broadcaster Bernadette Sembrano.

But as early as December last year, the show has already lost Bernadette.

"We knew and felt that Bernadette's heart was with 'Probe' more than with 'Wish,'" said Melo Esguerra, the show's executive producer.

"She was inclined to move with Probe. Of course, we were still hoping that she would stay with us. She was claiming that she, and I suppose that she, was happy (with 'Wish'). But she made a decision that she'd move with 'Probe.' Right away, we decided to call Vicky also last December.

At that time, "Probe" was in a deadlock with GMA 7, after the station delayed for a week the investigative program's exposé on Pagcor.

Bernadette was also suspended by the GMA 7's News and Public Affairs for reacting to the announcement of the delay on the news program, "Saksi," by walking out while the news program's credits were still running and she was still on cam. Bernadette had been filling in for Vicky then.

Before 2003 ended, the award-winning "The Probe Team" ended its decade-long relationship with the GMA 7.

MORALES: Only one night to make a decision

The staff and crew of "Wish Ko Lang" were then leaving for Europe to tape episodes for their supposed Christmas special, Esguerra recounted to Inquirer Entertainment last Tuesday.

"Bernadette was supposed to go with us," he said. "What happened was, she told us that she couldn't go with us because she was leav-

'WISH/ A30

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BSP keeps overnight rates unchanged

By Clarissa S. Batino

DESPITE the continued weakness of the peso, the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday left its benchmark overnight interest rates unchanged.

The Monetary Board said there was no need to further tighten its monetary policy after warding off speculation against the peso by raising last week the reserve requirement imposed on banks.

Monetary authorities, however, warned that they might consider "other policy measures" to avoid adverse inflationary implications of a sharp and sustained depreciation of the peso in line with their responsibility to maintain price stability.

The BSP has not changed its overnight interest rates since July, as the low inflation last year supported its policy stance. The overnight borrowing rate was kept at 6.75 percent while the lending rate remained at 9 percent.

The peso yesterday closed at 55.975 to $1 from 55.905 last Wednesday.

The local currency remained weak even after monetary authorities raised the banks' reserve requirement on deposits and deposit substitutes last week by 2 percentage points to 19 percent. The hike in reserves was expected to have siphoned off about P30 billion from the system, which could be used to buy dollars and speculate against the peso.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the supply of dollars this year could be boosted by increased dollar remittances particularly from overseas Filipino workers. The BSP said that in 2003, the dollar inflow from about 8 million overseas workers reached $7.6 billion as projected.

This year, OFW remittances were expected to hit at least $7.8 billion, according to the BSP chief.

In January, the net inflow of portfolio investments stood at $47.8 million, against only $19.8 million a year ago. In 2003, the net portfolio investments reached $676.8 million.

"What we have done today is not necessarily what we intend to do in the next six months. We can impose additional measures but we would rather not telegraph our plans to the market," according to the BSP chief.

Buenaventura said the Monetary Board believed that the current level of policy rates and reserves were sufficient to achieve the government's target of keeping the inflation rate between 4 and 5 percent this year while achieving an economic growth of at least 4.9 percent.

The central bank said it could raise overnight rates or increase anew the banks' reserve requirement if the weakness of the local currency would persist.

The central bank is also determined to make use of stronger moral suasion on banks to make sure they toe the line.

Bankers said the local currency would stay volatile because the factors that have dragged the peso down in the first place, such as political uncertainties and a shortage of dollars in the spot market, have not been addressed.

As demand for dollars build up towards the end of the month, traders said the peso would again fall to 56.20 or even lower in the coming weeks.

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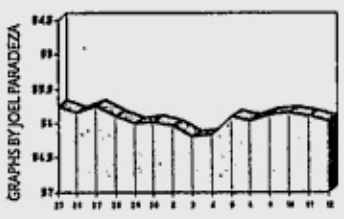

₱ 55.975 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 12, 2004

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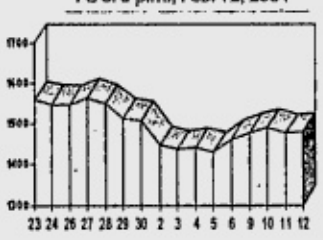

Shares end higher on Petron's gains

SHARES closed marginally higher yesterday, as bargain hunters nibbled on select issues while awaiting the result of the monthly rate-setting meeting of the central bank's Monetary Board, traders said.

(See stock market report on Page B7)

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 2.24 points, or 0.2 percent, at 1479.28 following Wednesday's 0.9 percent loss. Gainers led decliners 27 to 22, while 36 issues were unchanged.

Second-line blue chip Petron Corp. was the most actively traded stock, up P0.25, or 7.8 percent, at P3.45, on expectation the country's largest oil refiner will release favorable 2003 earnings next month.

"The market is still in consolidation, with investors still focused on corporate earnings," BPI Securities senior manager Roberto Cano told Dow Jones Newswires.

Expectation that the central bank won't tighten monetary policy during its Monetary Board meeting Thursday also prompted bargain hunters to pick up select stocks, said Cano.

Limiting the market's upside was the Philippines' failure to meet requirements to remain in the investment portfolio of U.S. pension fund California Public Employees Retirement System, or CalPERs, traders said.

Other traders, however, felt the CalPERs issue may have been given too much attention by the market.

Other active stocks included Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., up P5, or 0.5 percent, at P940, and Benpres, up P0.05, or 8.5 percent, at P0.64. *AP*

Gov't to pursue merger of Finance, DBM, Neda

THE MACAPAGAL administration is planning to merge three important agencies of the government—the Department of Finance, Department of Budget Management and National Economic and Development Authority—to create one economic "super body."

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin yesterday said the economic team had created a group that was tasked to study the merger of the three important departments in line with efforts to streamline government operations, enhance efficiency and cut costs.

Boncodin said that most countries had only one finance ministry that performs the functions of the said three agencies.

"The creation of one economic agency has been hatched quite a long time ago but it was only recently that we received a funding for the study of the proposed merger. Once the study is completed, a proposal can be submitted to Congress. This is a streamlining measure that cannot be mandated by just an executive order," according to the budget chief.

The study will determine the cost of the merger as well as the savings that will arise from the reduction of the workforce and other overhead costs. Each of the three agencies has between 300 and 500 employees.

The budget chief said multilateral agencies had supported the plan as it would trim down the bureaucracy.

Boncodin said three agencies were in support of the planned merger. Their employees, she said, had been complaining about the overlapping of certain functions.

The budget chief added the merger would allow the government to close redundant offices and retire affected employees.

In the last three years, the Macapagal administration has been trying to implement an aggressive streamlining program. But the plan was stalled by the inability of Congress to draft a legislation that will provide additional retirement benefits to some 10,000 to 20,000 government workers who may be declared redundant.

The government had asked Congress to pass a law that would grant affected government workers an additional half-a-month salary for every year of service on top of the monthly pension they would get from the Government Service Insurance System. *Clarissa S. Batino*

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IT looks like Bankard has stumbled on to its biggest collection case ever: The Yuchengcos now want at least P400 million be lopped off and refunded from the purchase price they paid Equitable PCIBank to gain control of the credit card company in 2000.

First, a little background.

The Yuchengcos, through RCBC Capital, acquired 67 percent of the publicly listed credit card company on Dec. 29, 2000 for "1.925 times the 1999 book value." Later, EPCIB disclosed that it had received P830.1 million, net of taxes, from the Bankard sale.

Still, despite the sale supposedly being on "as is, where is" basis and RCBC heralding the acquisition as its deal of the year, the Yuchengcos are now stricken with serious buyer's remorse.

According to the grapevine, RCBC had belatedly discovered undisclosed liabilities within Bankard eclipsing the actual purchase price.

An indication of the magnitude of Bankard's financial woes is that within the first year of the acquisition, the new owners wrote off nearly P532.5 million in credit card un-collectibles. The following year, Bankard wrote off an even greater P695.7 million in losses.

In addition, Bankard had to provide nearly P171 million allowance for probable losses for 2001 and 2002.

According to the grapevine, the belated discovery of the bad collectibles was the reason Bankard let go late last year of SGV as its longtime auditors, replacing them with, as if to spite the numbers-crunchers, SGV-breakaway firm Punongbayan and Araullo. Officially, Bankard said the replacement was to conform to the SEC requirement to change outside auditors every so often.

Still, the Yuchengcos may face an uphill battle to prove Bankard's alleged hidden losses. In six months after they acquired the credit card company, the Yuchengcos merged the RCBC credit card portfolio with Bankard, with Bankard paying parent RCBC P943.9 million for the merger.

Despite the merger and Bankard hiring 78 officers and staff of the RCBC credit card division, the enlarged Bankard saw its net income skid from P125 million in 2000 down to P118.7 million in 2001 and P83.9 million in 2002.

For the third quarter of 2003, Bankard reported P61.88 million in net income after writing off another P174 million in losses.

According to the grapevine, Bankard president Joven Reyes has already written EPCIB of the Yuchengco demand and their desire to quietly arbitrate the refund issue rather than slugging it out right away in the courts.

GSIS' new groove

THE SOCIAL Security System may be selling out of Equitable PCIBank but the Government Service Insurance System is enlarging its stake within the bank before the actual buy-in of taipan Henry Sy.

GSIS disclosed yesterday that it had acquired 2,290,000 shares of EPCIB last month. Strangely, GSIS senior vice president for corporate finance Richard Martinez and vice president for treasury Consuelo Manansala failed to disclose their average acquisition cost per share in their disclosure.

At an assumed average of P40 per share, GSIS' purchase price plus commission and taxes for the added shares would have topped P91.6 million.

The new buying spree of GSIS put its total EPCIB holdings at 81,626,233 shares as of end-January, about 43.5 percent of the SSS' end-2003 total shareholding of 187.8 million shares.

Combined, the SSS and GSIS shareholdings effectively translate into 41.6 percent control of the takeover target bank.

The broker reporting as having accumulated the most EPCIB shares, 4,066,575 shares alone in January (with not a single share sold), happens to be First Resources of Vivian Yuchengco.

While Yuchengco was buying, her uncle's RCBC Securities (whose nominee, Ma. Alicia Arroyo, aka Mrs. Jose Pidal) was incidentally on the other side of the fence, selling 22,439 shares.

Marian Securities of Richard Lee (ex-Urban Bank, Universal Motors owner) was a far second at 500,000 shares bought, and also not a single share sold.

Heard through the grapevine

INSTEAD of increasing the Go family's position in Equitable PCIBank amid a takeover attempt, EPCIB director Frank Go has lately sold 22,330 bank shares to unknown party/parties.

EPCIB president/CEO Antonio Go offered no explanation for his elder brother's action.

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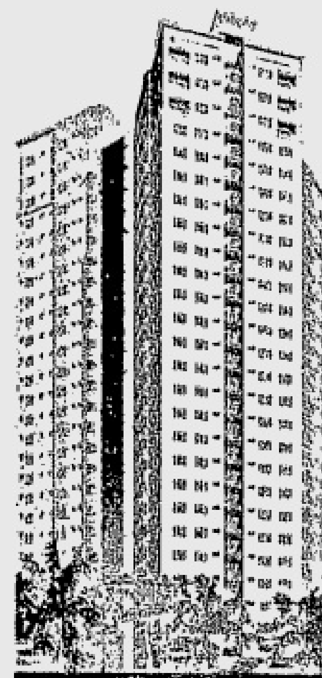

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Political stability to boost RP edge in call centers

By Abigail L. Ho

THE FURTHER deregulation of the telecommunications industry and an improvement in political stability will help boost the Philippines' chances of competing with India and China in the call center and business process outsourcing (BPO) business.

Lauro Vives, vice president and Philippine country head of information technology think tank META Group Asia Pacific, said the country was well on its way to becoming a real force to reckon with in the outsourcing industry, but certain concerns could hold it back.

He related that with 85 percent of the outsourcing market under its belt, India was perceived as a market leader.

"Will we ever surpass India? No, because India has scale and the Philippines does not. We just have to show that the Philippines is a high-quality service provider," he said during a presentation at the 4th e-Services Conference and Exhibit yesterday.

He related that while the Philippines' telecommunications infrastructure was among the best in Asia, a further deregulation could help make the country more attractive to outsourcers.

In another forum, Asian Wall Street Journal editor Reginald Chua said the Philippines had the potential to be a real giant in the outsourcing industry if it could only have "regulatory stability, good marketing and gumption."

He cited as the country's biggest problems confusing regulatory calls that were made in the past, instability borne by the threat of coup d'etats and uprisings, the huge budget deficit and recent Supreme Court decisions concerning big business.

These include the nullification of the government's contract with the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. for the construction and operation of the NaiaTerminal 3.

But Chua did say that the Philippines could continue to take advantage of its pool of highly skilled workforce.

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5 petroleum exploration projects slated for '04

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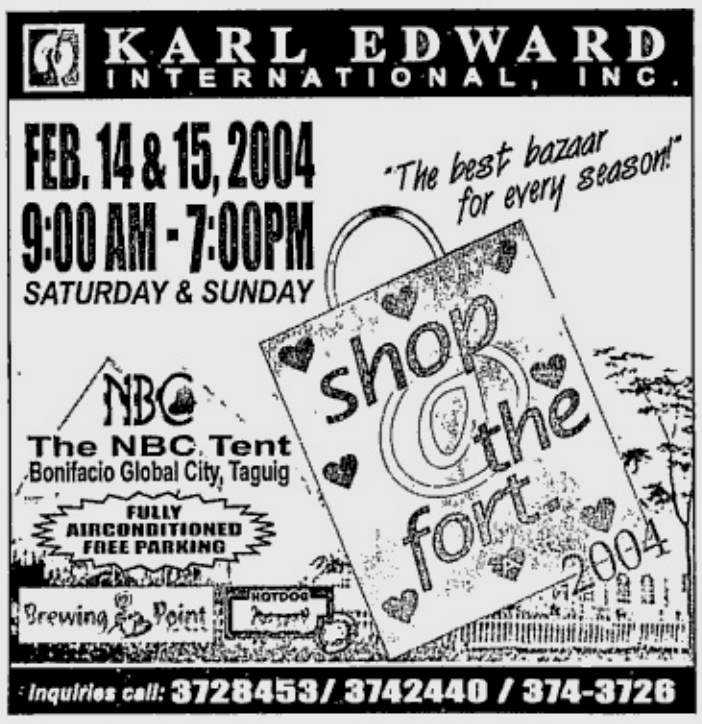
Bond Fund - US Dollar	0.9943	0.9918

* Note. These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.



By Ronnel W. Domingo

AT LEAST five petroleum exploration wells are expected to be drilled while two more service contracts are expected to be awarded in 2004, according to a Department of Energy official.

Energy Secretary Eduardo V. Mañalac said in an interview that two or three wells were slated for drilling in deep waters while two others would be drilled onshore.

He said drilling works would be done in Northwest Palawan, Sulu Sea, offshore Mindoro and Central Luzon.

Also, Mañalac said two service contracts covering the Manila Bay-West Central Luzon block and the Cagayan basin were in the advance stage of negotiations and could be awarded within this year.

The Manila Bay-West Central Luzon exploration block covers 480,000 hectares. Industry data show that two main prospects in the area were known to hold at least 700 billion cubic feet of natural gas or a third of the Malampaya reserve in Northwest of Palawan.

Experts say the proximity of the Manila Bay block to a developing gas market and the shallowness of the water meant a relatively easy development of any discovery in the area.

Industrial businesses and the end-consumer sector are expected to emerge in Southern Metro Manila and adjacent provinces, where a planned 100-kilometer pipeline would deliver gas from a processing plant in Batangas to Sucat in Parañaque City.

Petroleum seekers are looking for natural gas reserves in the Cagayan exploration block.

Mañalac said winning bidders in the First Petroleum Contracting Round or PCR-1—which would be held next month—were expected to start their drilling programs in 2005 or 2006.

Under PCR-1, the government is putting in auction service contracts for 46 of the country's most promising exploration blocks.

Also last week, Mañalac said the government would bid out contracts on geothermal exploration after PCR-1.

He said there were 10 geothermal exploration blocks available.

"We do not have a complete national inventory of geothermal resources like what we have on petroleum, but we have enough data to be able to do a competitive bidding round," he said.

Spending our taxes wisely

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

LAST Friday, Feb. 4, because of the deadlock between the Senate and the House of Representatives, the media reported that we would get the reenacted 2003 National Budget for 2004. While this is true, the 2004 budget level is higher than that of 2003. This is because of the P41-billion increase in debt service, resulting in a 2004 budget of P852 billion.

Unfortunately, less than 10 percent of this will be for capital outlays. Some P276 billion is for personnel services, P225 billion for maintenance and operating expenses and P272 billion for debt service. Only P80 billion, or even less than one-third of our debt service, will be left for capital outlays such as roads, school buildings, and irrigation structures.

Political expediency

In view of this tight budget, it is critical that the government spends our taxes wisely. However, some forces in the government care more for political expediency than our people's welfare.

For example, in land reform, land is distributed to farmers so the government can proclaim that it distributed a large number of hectares to poor farmers. But in many cases, without the accompanying support services such as credit, technology and marketing arrangements, which the former landlord used to provide, the farmer is worse off than before.

Instead of the government correcting its mistakes and providing these farmers with support services, it often gives little emphasis to their plight. It proceeds with distributing more land, without a guarantee of the necessary accompanying support services that leave many farmers more destitute than ever.

The same holds true for farm to market roads. The government proclaims the construction of farm to market roads every year. But all too often, these farm to market roads deteriorate rapidly because of substandard specifications. This leaves the farmers with unusable roads and the taxpayers' money wasted, again because of political expediency.

Irrigation

In irrigation, there have been significant improvements. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA), largely under the leadership of Administrator Jesus Paras, has performed very well in the last three years. From 2001 to 2003, a yearly average of 23,320 hectares has been opened up to new irrigation. This is 39 percent better than the 1998 to 2000 performance. For rehabilitated hectares, the NIA yearly average has been 186,000 hectares, 58 percent better than the prior three years. (Note that the number of rehabilitated hectares is more than eight times that of the new irrigated hectares, despite the much smaller budget given to rehabilitation).

Despite this good performance, NIA could have done even better if it had not been subjected to political pressures. Similar to land reform where lands are distributed often without support services and farm to market roads constructed with substandard specifications, political expediency has been a detrimental factor in determining irrigation budget allocations in the past.

Today, according to a top NIA official, out of our 1.5 million irrigated hectares, only 800,000 are operational. Again, according to this official, this 800,000 operationally irrigated hectare level has remained at the same level for the last 10 years. This is because of the politically expedient bias for building new irrigation systems rather than rehabilitating existing ones. Thus, while almost half of our irrigated hectares remain non-operational, we continue to give priority to building new irrigation systems.

Cost/benefit

Administrator Paras says that if he is given P500 million more for repair and rehabilitation, he can make operational an additional 25,000 hectares. He will spend an average of only P20,000 per hectare for this. In comparison, it costs between P200,000 and P600,000 per hectare to open up a national irrigation system (NIS). In other words, for the same amount of money, you can have more than 10 times the coverage if you rehabilitate an existing irrigation system rather than build a new NIS.

In recent years, there has been an improvement in the budget allocation for repair and rehabilitation. For 2003, this amounted to 35 percent of the NIA budget. Without political pressures, this would and should have been greater.

New irrigation

If new irrigation should be constructed, the best use of taxpayers' money and the greatest benefit to the farmers should dictate where

SPENDING B8

IRRIGATION TYPE	EIRR	BUDGET DISTRIBUTION	2003 NIA BUDGET
Shallow Tube Wells	77 %	11 %	P 0.5 B
Communal	14 %	11 %	P 0.5 B
National Irrigation System (NIS)	8 %	78%	P 3.7 B

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Organic farming: Venture with a conscience

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

(Last of a series)

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—IN Buguias, the country's salad bowl, the likes of organic farming convert Rosemarie Bestre are rare.

"Since converting a chemical farm into an organic farm takes at least three to five years, many farmers fear the scenario of not being able to pay their previous loans," she says.

Many farmers in Buguias and other vegetable districts in Benguet often obtain a loan from financiers, mostly agro-chemical dealers, for their fertilizers and pesticides.

Barring unfortunate events such as disasters, pests and low price, a farmer can immediately pay his loans after a good harvest.

FEATURE

But if one or more of these factors are present, the farmer has to bargain with his creditor to pay the loan after the next harvest.

Many farmers thus fear going organic because they worry that they cannot pay their previous loans while their farms are being converted, says Bestre. Another fear is the intensive labor involved in organic farming.

Bestre says many farmers have been used to buying instant fertilizers and other inputs so they would find it a waste of time to be making compost, for example.

But such fears may belong to a person afraid of his own shadow.

Freedom

Still unknown to many farmers, organic or biodynamic farming, as practitioner Greg Kitma of Baguio City calls it, actually frees farmers from the debt chain.

Cultivating a 3,000-square-meter biodynamic farm, Kitma has not only freed himself from middlemen who, even without lifting a hoe, make a killing out of the multimillion vegetable industry.

Each week Kitma, who has been engaged in biodynamic farming since 1993, sells his produce to families in Metro Manila and regular customers in Baguio City.

Except for occasional loans from a credit cooperative, Kitma has freed himself from the shackles of debt from financiers and banks.

He has earned the trust and loyalty of his clients so much so that some of them would volunteer to lend him money in times of need. He repays whatever he borrows in kind—through his produce—without, if not with very minimal, interest.

In 2001, two clients sponsored Kitma's round-trip ticket to Australia where he underwent advanced training on biodynamic farming under the tutelage of Alex Podolinsky.

Podolinsky, now 81, is a farmer and scientist who first advocated and practiced biodynamic farming in Australia. He and the Australian farmers he trained are now trading not only organic vegetables but also organic or free-range livestock and poultry.

Why were clients supportive of Kitma's advanced training on biodynamic farming in Australia?

This is because "in return, they also benefit in terms of the high nutrition quality of food I raise for them," says Kitma.

The arrangement Kitma has evolved with his clients is what he calls "community or client-supported agriculture." It can also be called community or client-supported economy.

Under this setup, clients are also willing to help Kitma during unfortunate disasters such as when a nearby creek swelled during a typhoon and silted part of his farm.

"So as far as loans go, I'm worry-free," he says.

Kitma's farm also requires no input, except for a truckload of horse manure he occasionally buys from horse renters in Baguio's Wright Park.

But he intends to buy four cows, which can produce enough dung for his compost.

He also produces half of his seed supply, and intends to be totally self-sufficient in seeds in due time.

Organic restaurant

In Lamtang, Irisan village, 8 km west of Baguio City's downtown lies "Eve's Garden," an organic food house that seeks to help customers "experience health in their meal."

There's one thing unique about the food house. Clients have to make advance reservations so the 13 varieties of lettuce, which make up the vegetable salad dish, are harvested and prepared at the right time. This is to ensure that clients get all the trace elements from the organically grown vegetables.

Dr. Evelyn Acosta, a retired doctor and an authority on alternative nutrition medicine, manages Eve's Garden so she knows how to ensure her clients' health and nutrition for their money's worth.

Just below the food house is the organic farm of Acosta's brother, Ambros, who raises not only 13 varieties of organic lettuce and some leeks, parsley and celery, but also herbs such as basil, mint and oregano.

Besides providing Eve's Garden's vegetable salad, the organic farm also supplies organic vegetables to other clients, which include hotels and some local families.

The hectare-wide Acosta compound is a thriving testimony of a farming system and restaurant business that invest on the health and nutrition of clients.

From Kitma's and the Acosta's experience, the message is clear: another healthier and gentler farming and business system—different from that, which is beholden to agro-chemical firms, financiers and big-time traders—is possible.

GREG Kitma hauling compost made of decayed horse dung, weeds and grass. MAURICE MALANES/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

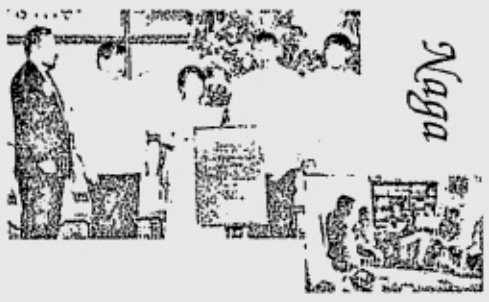
Bulacan

empowered woman
championed cooperatives
upgraded the skills of the youth
responded to community feedback
promoted local culture & tourism
delivered social services through volunteerism
streamlined the bureaucracy & improved personnel productivity

Marikina

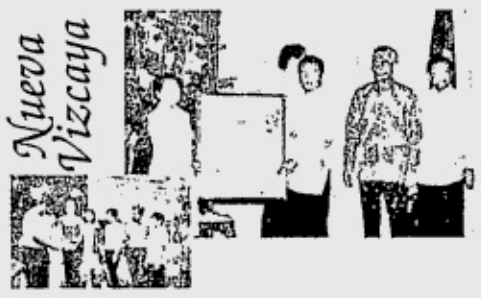
responded effectively to emergencies
addressed housing issues of the urban poor
instilled order & discipline in the sidewalks
provided public access to tools & equipments
cleaned up the river to boost the city's economic climate

Naga



enhanced the early education program
upgraded operations through computerization
provided reliable service in times of emergency
strengthened urban poor participation in governance
developed partnerships for regional economic development
raised performance standards for government officials/employees
empowered citizens to actively participate in key government activities

Nueva Vizcaya



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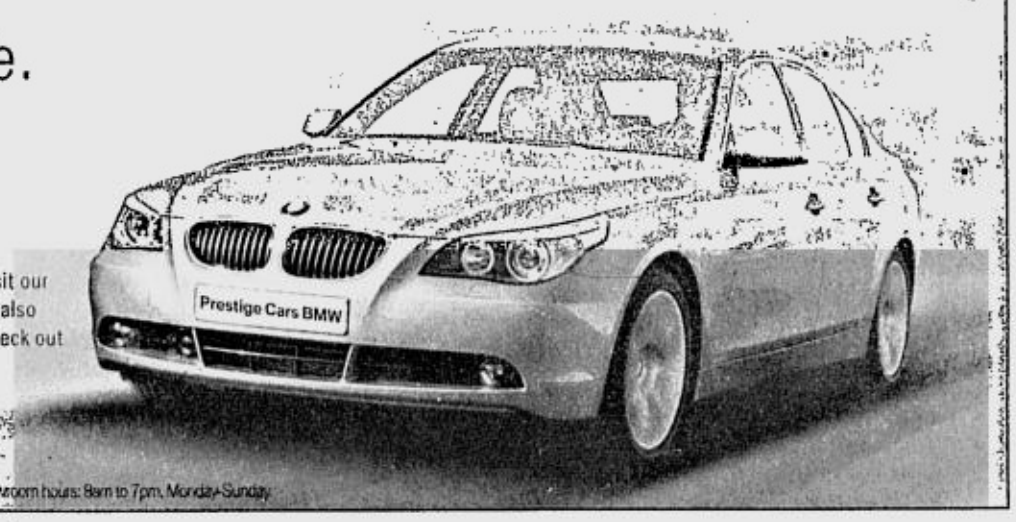

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BUSINESS Friday

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Firms cash in on Filipinos' flair for romance

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IF the Philippines has the longest Christmas season, then it is also said to have the longest Valentine's season. And many businesses are not complaining.

Jarlath Lynch, general manager of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, attributes the season's popularity to the Filipinos' romantic nature.

From his many postings abroad, Lynch concludes that the season of hearts is uniquely enjoyed in the Philippines.

"It is a large event here and that is part of the culture, which says that people should not take the people they love for granted," Lynch says.

It is for this reason that five-star hotels always come up with something special for guests in keeping with the season.

"For many, this is an opportunity to dine and enjoy the hotel's facilities. We are always full during this time," he says.

The Makati Shangri-l also took the Valentine's season a little further by coming up with a list of gift items that would last throughout the year.

"We came up with a unique package of items, everything from accommodations to dining cards or monthly cakes, that would last the whole year, not just on Valentine's Day," Lynch says.

But perhaps, no group profits more from the season than the flower industry.

Dustin Andaya of islandrose.net, the e-commerce site of Philippine Cut Flower Corp. (PCFC), said in an interview that orders start pouring in as soon as the calendar turns to February.

Andaya says that the Valentine's season sale would account for about 25 percent of annual sales. It is also during this time when the company charges about 50 percent more for the flowers because prices in Holland, where most of the flowers come from, increase as well.

During normal months, a dozen red roses coursed through islandrose.net would cost between $19.95 and $24.95, but this goes up to about $36 on Valentine's, but buyers do not seem to mind.

"I believe Filipinos are very romantic. Prices do not matter at this time, the important thing for many is to be able to send flowers to their loved ones," Andaya says.

He says the local farms cannot meet the demand during Valentine's but they are not keen on increasing their production because they will have an overcapacity for the rest of the year.

"But we are seeing Mother's Day catching up here, so there is more demand for flowers," Andaya explains.

PCFC is credited for having invented the Philippine cut flower industry when it started the first full scale rose production in 1983.

Today, PCFC is considered the largest single producer of quality roses in the Philippines. Under the brand name Island Rose, PCFC roses became a by-word in quality at affordable prices.

Victoria Court, one of the leaders in the motel industry, is another company that profits from the Filipinos' overwhelming desire to celebrate the red-letter day.

Victoria Court business manager William M. Go said that its rooms would always be full during the season, particularly before and after Valentine's Day.

Visitors start coming in as early as 4 in the afternoon of the 13th and the turnover goes on at a frantic pace over the next two days.

Crowd favorites are its themed areas such as the Wild Africa suite, Moroccan and Bali rooms and even a Surfer's room.

"People come to us because we add some more romance to the occasion. Aside from the romantic ambiance, they can fantasize that they are in Bali or Morocco. They don't have to go there," Go explains.

He adds that people go to Victoria Court to rekindle their romance, as they offer well-designed rooms with quality service at prices lower than the hotels.

Their designs are also quite different from standard hotel fare.

"We have been able to carve a niche for ourselves in the hospitality business. We also take pride in our service, the cleanliness of our rooms and value-for-money, which is why we are priced a little higher than our direct competitors," he says.

Victoria Court was established in 1972 and now has 10 branches, the busiest of which is the Adriatico branch in Manila.

RP one-stop shop set to conquer US

By Amy R. Remo

TODAY's fast-paced lifestyle requires one to move fast and accomplish several tasks in one shot.

This is what Sure Express Worldwide Corp. offers clients with its courier, ticketing, remittance and business centers—all in one store.

Started in 2001, Surex is the franchising firm of Skynet International Express and United States Postal Service.

Skynet has been providing courier services since 1998. In November 2001, Skynet signed an agreement with USPS to become its exclusive agent in the Philippines and the rest of Asia Pacific.

USPS meanwhile, is the only mail carrier that delivers to all addresses in the US and handles roughly 52 percent of the world's mail.

According to Henry Tsai, president of Surex, Skynet's association with USPS is "expected to increase and solidify its current client base and portfolio."

"Our tie-up with USPS gives us an edge over other companies because we have international contacts, international expertise," adds Tsai.

Tsai says that Surex is the first of its kind here in the country as a one-stop business center. Other outlets provide only one or two of the services they have.

Surex offers domestic and international express and priority delivery services, sea and air freight, money transfer, ticketing and notarization. Its other services include computer rentals, Internet services, encoding, typing, graphic designing, lay-outing, photocopying, bookbinding and international and domestic call services.

To provide these services, Surex has established tie-ups with other companies such as DHL, Orient Consolidation Services, International Trade Freight, Cebu Pacific, WG&A Superferry and Western Union.

Tsai says Surex initially started with around 50 "accredited outlets," which are merely receiving centers for packages.

But in 2002, Tsai decided to establish a franchise program instead, with the help of Francorp, a world leader in franchise development and consulting. The accredited outlets were either closed down or became franchised outlets.

"I figured that the only way we can promote (Surex) and be easily recognized is through franchising," says Tsai.

Through franchising, Surex was able to include other services such as the ticketing and money transfer and not just courier services.

To date, there are about 44 individual Surex franchisees. Some franchisees even have two or three outlets.

According to Marivic Mejia Matias, VP for operations, the franchisees have to meet all the requirements and undergo rigorous training before they are allowed to put up an outlet.

"The total investment is about P800,000 to P1.2 million. But that includes everything such as the construction of the outlet and the training," explains Matias. "We also require only about 15 to 20 sq.m. for the outlet."

Matias says that each potential franchisee has to undergo seven levels of training—one for each service they provide. They have to pass a test before moving on to the next level. The whole training program takes about three months.

"One of the difficulties we encountered was that not everybody was cut out to be a franchisee. You have to have skills especially in sales," says Matias. "When we see they lack the necessary skills, we decline."

Tsai adds that another difficulty they encountered was that some franchisees forget their training by the time the outlet starts operations.

"We often have to give them a second round of training, a refresher course," says Tsai.

Matias says that they continuously monitor all the outlets to ensure they are operating smoothly.

Matias adds that the break even point normally comes on the 10th month.

"In fact, our record breaker is an outlet in the Binondo area, where the franchisee broke even as early as the second month," relates Matias.

The success of the franchise outlets merely shows that people indeed patronize Surex.

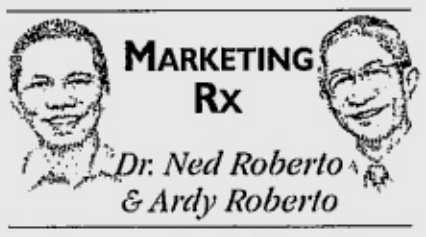
"I think it's because of our big network—we are affiliated with some of the biggest companies in their respective industries," says Tsai.

Tsai adds that Surex has longer operating hours. They are open from Mondays to Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. They also pick up packages from outlets every day.

With the success of Surex franchises, Tsai feels that they are now ready for international expansion.

"We will start putting up outlets in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, China and in the US, particularly in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles," says Tsai.

What to do with a weak distributor you can't fire



HERE'S a question from an anxious marketer trying to cope with a distributor that top management refuses to replace:

Q: "We have a weak distributor who is short on sales reps and therefore has low coverage. He is our 'weakest link.' We have a host of other problems with him like his inferior pricing policy. Since top management decided to keep this distributor, we don't know what to do. Meanwhile sales continue to decline. What should we do?"

The first thing to do is accept the situation. Perhaps that distributor is a relative or enjoys a special "valentine's relationship" with top management. After all, you said you have no choice but to accept. So, just make the most of the situation. If your marketing objectives put a priority on coverage, then reanalyze your coverage strategy in the context of the distributor's sales plan.

What is meant by "reanalyzing your coverage strategy?"

It makes a lot of difference how you define coverage. The traditional definition is reaching most, if not all, of your product category's retail trade customers. The other way of looking at coverage is getting the brand to get as big a slice of the potential market as possible.

The first definition that looks at population reach is talking about quantity, that is, getting your brand placed in as many retail stores as possible.

For this kind of coverage, you would obviously require that your distributor have a large sales force. This coverage strategy is based on the wrong assumption that all stores in the trade population are equally important business-wise.

The second definition avoids this assumption. In fact, it starts from the premise that some stores are more important than others; that some generate more business for your product category than the others.

This is the "Pareto" understanding of coverage. This says that about 20 percent of the population of stores often account for 80 percent of the total product category sales.

Of course, check first if this Pareto distribution of the store population is true for your brand's category.

If it is, then it clearly makes more marketing sense to concentrate your limited placement and selling resources on the 20 percent of stores that account for 80 percent of the business. Why spread your selling resources thinly?

Rx: Get a good sales plan from your distributors.

This is where we find the basic and fundamental problem of managing a distributor. Most distributors don't prepare and provide a sales plan. Those that do usually have lousy and sloppily prepared plans.

We often ask marketers why they don't demand a good sales plan from their distributors while they mandate their ad agency to submit a good advertising plan. (And to think that the resources in sales and distribution are a multiple of those in advertising.)

For some unknown reasons, marketers accept verbal sales commitments from their distributors. We've also met distributors who, when asked "who's responsible for sales here?" give us the ultimate abdication-of-responsibility answer: "In this company, everyone is responsible for sales."

The trouble of course is that marketers tolerate and even accept this posture.

Most of the time, it's not that a distributor does not want to give you a sales plan. Most just don't know how to prepare and write one. In such a case, the solution is obvious. Teach them to make a good one.

The benefits

The real benefit of getting a sales plan from your distributor is that you get a base document that will help improve coverage strategies, dig up unanticipated problems and failure traps and see how it fits under the overall strategy.

We recall, for example, a distributor who presented a sales plan. It was clear to us that he and his staff worked hard at putting it together. The coverage plan was the first type we described and it included trade promos, merchandising and in-store promo programs.

In the ensuing discussion of the details of the plan, the distributor slowly realized that his budget for selling, trade promos, merchandising and in-store promo activities total almost equaled the targeted sales revenue!

When the second definition of coverage was explained and discussed, this distributor finally admitted that he got so used to doing things according to the first concept of coverage that he never thought of a more cost-effective alternative.

So ask for a written sales plan. It's not only for your own good as a marketer but for the good of the distributor as well. Your comments or questions are welcome. *Send to MarketingRx@SaltAndLightVentures.com*

Tobacco now grown in the highlands

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBA, Benguet—Eugenio Palispis' farm in Barangay Tabaan Norte here is almost at level with the Marcos bust bombed by communist rebels in 2002.

Although the farm is just 5.5 km from the national highway, reaching it means climbing hills.

Like most of his village mates, Palispis, the barangay captain of Tabaan Norte, used to cultivate beans and Chinese gabi (yam) but prices kept dropping while costs of farm inputs kept rising.

"Sometimes, the price of beans would go down to as low as P2 a kilogram. It's really a losing situation," he said.

Palispis, however, is not one to just take things sitting down. So last October, he decided to plant something alien to Benguet.

At first, his neighbors thought the crop was Chinese cabbage when it was a few days old. But the leaves grew much bigger and it turned out to be a Virginia tobacco plant.

It was the first time that Virginia tobacco was grown in the Benguet highlands, at almost 4,000 feet above sea level. The leaves were so green that tobacco manufacturers who saw the leaves were ecstatic.

Matthew Diong, vice president of tobacco leaf supplier Trans-Manila Inc., said the good quality of Virginia tobacco in this town was the result of the so-called early crop technology introduced by Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. (PMPMI).

"Growing tobacco is opposite to rice farming because you need higher humidity for tobacco. Planting in the 'ber' months (September to December) results in less-stressed tobacco plants in the highlands," Diong said.

Roque Basso, Philip Morris' agronomist from Brazil, added that the climate in Tuba is similar to the Caribbean and could result in high-quality leaves.

The National Tobacco Administration, together with TMI and PMPMI, started the upland tobacco-growing project in Tabaan Norte in September with 46 tobacco farmers.

"We guaranteed the farmers that we will buy their tobacco down to the last kilo," Diong said.

Palispis planted about 16,000 tobacco seedlings while his neighbor Mallari Pakis planted 12,800 seedlings.

Palispis' initial investment includes P25,000 for the flue-curing barn and P18,000 for the fertilizers. Irrigation is provided by the farmers' cooperative.

"I will not invest unless I see huge profits in this," he said.

PMPMI also started the first tobacco training school here where farmers are taught the latest in tobacco growing and post-harvest technology, including early cropping.

Diong said it was crucial that Tuba farmers are taught the proper technology in their "virgin" cropping.

A FARM hand works in tobacco plantation in Tuba, Benguet.

Councilor Jessie Alos said tobacco growing is most welcome as long as it brings in profits to the farmers.

"Right now, our vegetable farmers are merely surviving and the future is bleak because of importation," Alos said.

Diong said encouraging politicians to support tobacco planting here took time because of the bad impression of cigarette smoking.

Another fear is that Tuba farmers might cut down too many trees as firewood is used to fuel the curing process.

Diong, however, said that instead of firewood, Tuba farmers would use coal briquettes, which are cheaper and environmentally friendlier because these use waste pulp and clay.

Dr. Roberto Bonoan, NTA farm development department chief, also said Tuba tobacco would not adversely affect the tobacco production of Northern Luzon as a whole because the production here is "just a drop in the bucket."

He said 40,000 hectares are planted with different types of tobacco.

Diong is eyeing the export market for the Benguet tobacco. PMPI began exporting 600 metric tons of quality tobacco to affiliate firms in the United States, Turkey, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Australia. The exported leaves, however, are of the Philippine burley variety, mosrly grown in Isabela.

Diong said after three years, he would evaluate the joint venture in Tuba and see if the Benguet tobacco could be exported.

More automotive firms set to export CBUs

By Michelle V. Remo

BMW PHILIPPINES and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. are reportedly set to begin exporting completely built-up units within the year, boosting the dollar-generating capacity of the country.

With this development, the Philippines will have three car firms engaged in export.

Currently, only Ford Motor Co. Philippines is exporting CBUs.

Without revealing the car firms, Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima on Wednesday announced the export plans of the two manufacturers.

Sources in the automotive industry confirmed that the car companies involved are Mitsubishi and BMW.

The decision of Mitsubishi and BMW to export vehicles assembled in the Philippines came after the government granted export incentives to CBU manufacturers last year.

The incentives grant is part of the government's Motor Vehicle Development Program (MVDP).

The program is aimed at turning the Philippines into one of Southeast Asia's major exporters of CBUs.

The MVDP is expected to increase the country's annual CBU sales to 300,000 units within three to five years.

Last year, the automotive industry sold 92,000 units in the local market—8 percent higher than its 2002 domestic sales.

Ford's CBU exports reached 13,500.

Aside from the export incentives grant, the rationalization of the excise tax law last year also pushed the development agenda of the auto industry, according to industry insiders.

The shift in the basis of the excise tax—from engine to price—resulted in lower prices for most passenger and commercial vehicles.

The additional CBU exports of Mitsubishi and BMW are expected to help the country attain its goal of exporting 25,000 vehicles this year and at least 50,000 units beginning 2006.

Ford is planning to increase exports to 16,000 CBUs this year.

According to Undersecretary Gregory Domingo, the improved business environment in the country, brought about by the MVDP, is expected to entice more car manufacturers to engage in export.

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LA UNION, PHILIPPINES
Tel. & Fax No. (63) (72) 888-53-54

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND SUBMIT PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) hereby invites interested contractors/project proponents (local or foreign firms) to pre-qualify and submit comparative/competitive project proposals to the Unsolicited Proposal received from a reliable firm for the Build and Transfer (BT) **Construction of the DMMMSU Integrated Educational Business Administrative Center (DEBAC) Project** located at San Fernando City, La Union on a 15-Year Payment Plan at 12% annual interest and pursuant to R.A. 6957 as amended by R.A. 7718 and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

Interested contractors/project proponents are required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) addressed to the Chairman, University Bids and Awards Committee (UBAC) at DMMMSU, 3rd Floor JICA Building, Sapilang, Bacnotan, La Union on or before **March 01, 2004 until 12 noon** ("Submission Deadline"). Pre-qualification documents and forms are available for issuance to interested potential contractors/project proponents starting February 09, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Thousand (P500,000 00) Pesos (only in Philippine Currency and presentation of documents) showing adequate capability to sustain the financing requirements of the construction of the project.

DMMMSU reserves the right to reject any or all applications for pre-qualification, to waive any defect or infirmity therein, to accept a project proposal and to award the contract to the most advantageous proposal.

(Sgd.) DR. ELVI C. BUGAOAN
Chairman, UBAC

(PDI-February 13, 16 & 23, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Taytay
Palawan
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR

NOTICE TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The MUNICIPALITY OF TAYTAY, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN invites prospective bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the "EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE TO GATHER OR COLLECT EDIBLE BIRD'S NEST WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THIS MUNICIPALITY."

Minimum Bid Price = P2,500,000.00

Interested bidders may obtain information from the Office of the Municipal Treasurer, Taytay, Palawan from February 17 to 23, 2004 and secure bid documents upon payment of non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Fifty Pesos (P 250.00).

Pre-qualification of bidder conference will be on February 24, 2004 at the Office of the Municipal Mayor.

Dropping/Opening of Bids in the presence of the bidders will be on February 26, 2004 at 2:00 PM at the Session Hall of Sangguniang Bayan, Taytay, Palawan.

The MPBAC reserves the right to reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s) and to accept such bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ROBERTO V. RODRIGUEZ
MPBAC - Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 2, 11 & 13, 2004)

Total to invest P140 million in new station

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TOTAL Philippines Inc. has earmarked some P140 million for the construction of a new service station along the South Luzon Expressway this year, company president and managing director Jeff Attwood said.

Attwood said in an interview yesterday that construction of the service station would start next month.

Attwood said Total would also put up 15 new filling stations within the year.

Attwood declined, however, to say how much the company had set aside for its capital expenditures.

The planned station is near the Alabang exit on the northbound side of Slex.

Oil officials regard service stations along the tollway as significant sources of revenue, including income from non-fuel businesses such as fast-food outlets and convenience stores.

Also yesterday, the Department of Energy signed a memorandum of agreement with Total Philippines Inc. and 10 vehicle manufacturers to do a fuel efficiency run for light vehicles.

Attwood said the program aimed primarily at developing fuel efficiency standards for passenger vehicles.

Bicol named coconut zone

SORSOGON CITY—The Bicol Region will be declared a "coconut zone" with China willing to provide some $100 million to bankroll key projects.

Linda Hermogino, DAR regional director, said that China was willing to provide machinery and funds for projects in Regions 4, 5 and 6.

DAR recently launched the Unlad Sakahang Niyogan Project aimed at boosting production and the income of coconut farmers in Pilar town.

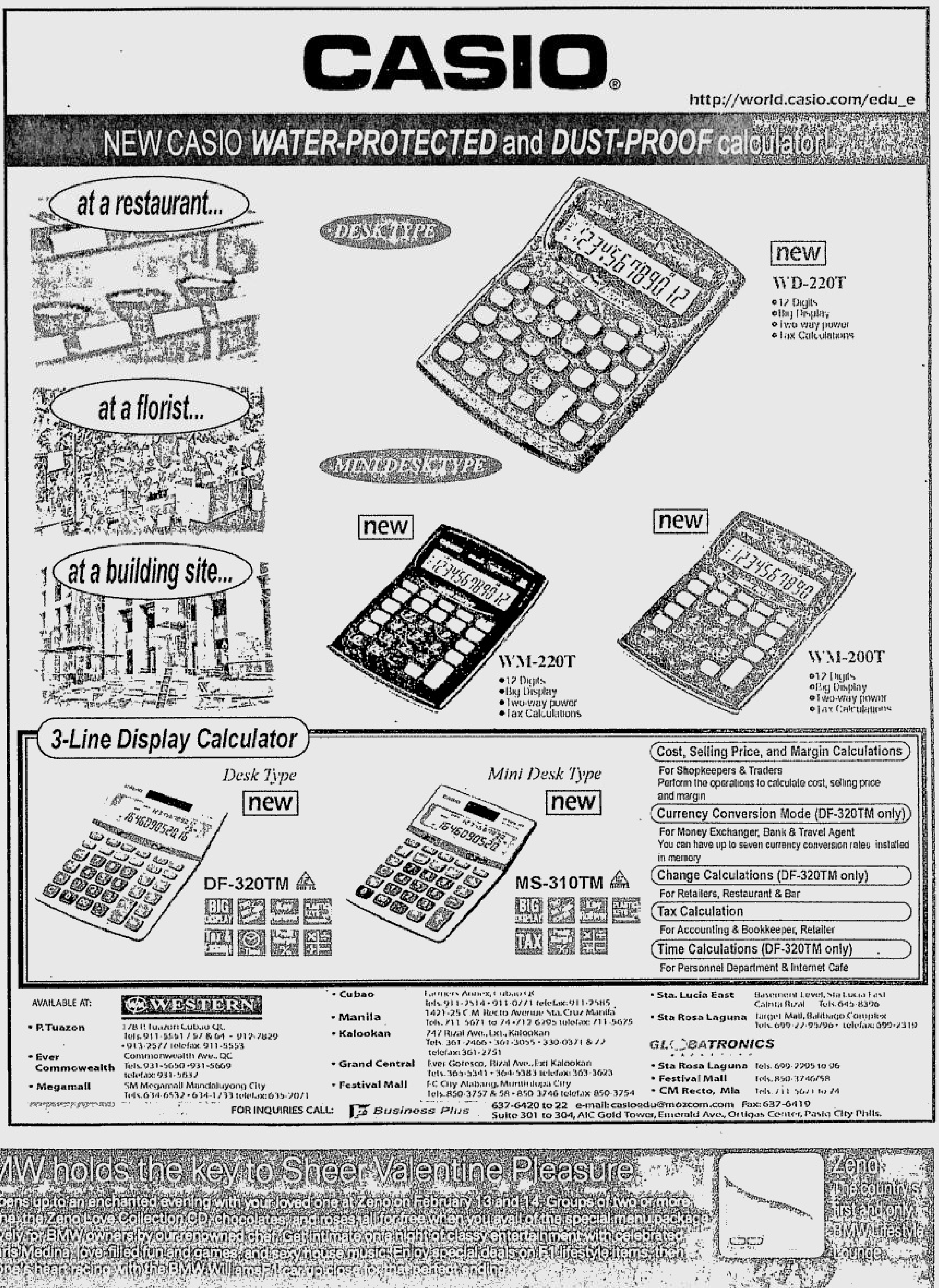
The project involves replanting and fertilization of coconut trees, introduction of different crops, poultry and adoption of contour farming and soil fertility management practices.

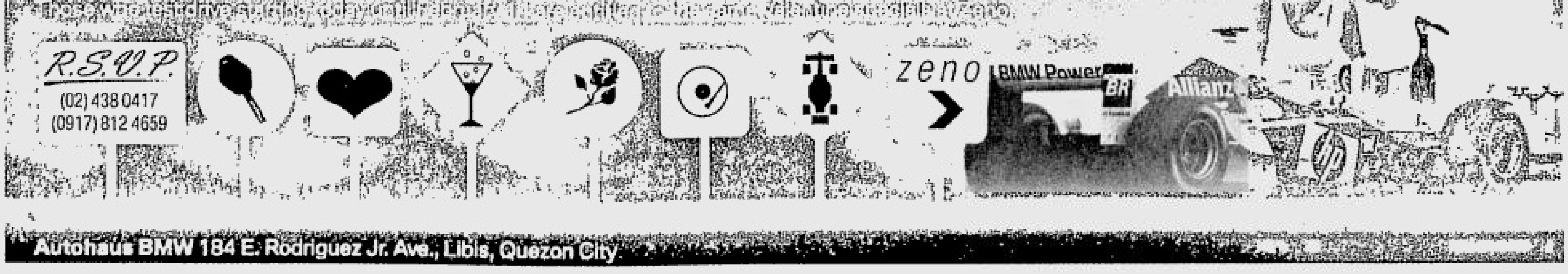
The DAR, PCA and the local government will assist the first batch of 25 farmers who will manage the project in the first three years and then choose a second group of farmers for the succeeding years.

It is expected that in five to six years, over 50 percent of farmers in Pilar will benefit from the project, after which the local government will take over the project form the DAR and PCA as a regular municipal extension program.

A study conducted by the DAR showed that almost 90 percent of agricultural lands in Pilar are devoted to coconut production.

The study likewise noted that coconut-farming households in Pilar belong to the lowest income earners in the province. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*





PSE nears completion of sale of another block of shares

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER accepting the subscription of five institutional investors to 5.2 million new shares on Wednesday, the Philippine Stock Exchange is expecting to complete in the next two to three days the sale of another chunk of shares to foreign investors.

The bourse, however, has yet to decide whether to issue new shares for the prospective sale. The sale will involve 520,755 to 867,171 shares, ATR-King Eng Capital Partners Inc. president and chief executive Manuel Tordesillas said in a news briefing yesterday.

Tordesillas said the sale of this block of shares was expected to fetch around P104 million for the local bourse.

Tordesillas said ATR-Kim Eng, serving as underwriter for the exchange, was currently in discussions with United States- and London-based investors for the sale of the share block.

PSE chair Alicia Rita Arroyo said the deal was on the verge of closing. This would most likely happen "in two to three days."

These yet-to-be-sold shares represent the remaining 3.6 percent of PSE common shares that would have to be sold to non-brokers for the exchange to fully comply with the terms of its demutualization.

According to a Securities and Exchange Commission directive, brokers of the PSE should comply with the ownership cap for exchanges under the Securities Regulation Code (SRC).

Under the SRC, institutional investors like brokers and financial institutions can own up to only 20 percent of the local bourse, while individual investors can own up to only 5 percent.

Taking this mandate into consideration, the local bourse has to sell 80 percent of its total outstanding shares to non-brokers,

TORDESILLAS PDI PHOTO

like the financial institutions that subscribed to 5.2 million new shares Wednesday.

These investors include the Government Service Insurance System, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. Beneficial Trust Fund, San Miguel Corp. Retirement Fund, King Eng Investment Ltd., and KE Strategic Pte Ltd.

The sale fetched P629 million, which the PSE will use "to develop the exchange's infrastructure to support business efficiency, fortify its working capital and address other concerns that benefit the shareholders."

The new shares issued to the five institutional investors represented 36.4 percent of the shares issued to non-brokers. Issuing an additional 3.6 percent to foreign investors would lift this number to 40 percent.

This, Arroyo said, was a "substantial compliance" with the SRC, paving the way for the PSE's full demutualization.

"The real requirement is 80 percent, but we'll be doing it in phases, as the market improves. The 40 percent is already substantial compliance. Hopefully, there'll be better cooperation with the SEC as this will promote the stability (of the exchange)," she said.

Spending our taxes wisely

From page B4

the budget allocations go.

On Page B4 is a table using data provided in UPLB Chancellor Wilfredo David's recently released book "Averting the Water Crisis in Agriculture". (He remarked that the situation is "very alarming.") It lists the average economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of the different irrigation systems. We have compared this with the 2003 NIA budget allocation of P4.7 billion.

Conclusion

In irrigation, the direction is clear. Taxpayers' money is wisely used by allocating more for rehabilitation than new construction. The 35 percent budget share for rehabilitation should be very significantly increased.

For new construction, shallow tube wells have an EIRR almost 10 times that of NIS. Yet its share is only one-eighth that of NIS. The budget share of shallow tube wells should likewise significantly increase while that of the NIS should decrease.

We should support Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo, Administrator Paras and the good political forces in overcoming the bad forces that favor political expediency over farmer welfare. Then we can be assured that with an extremely tight 2004 national budget, where even less than 10 percent can be used for essential capital outlays, the government will finally spend our taxes wisely.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former Undersecretary of Agriculture and Trade and Industry; and former Chair and Cabinet Secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.)

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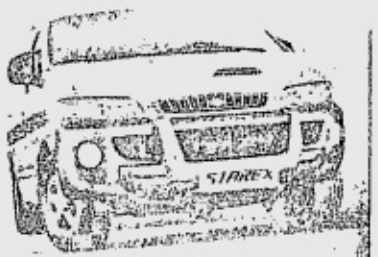

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(As of February 12, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	17	17	55,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45	45	44.5	45	584,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39.5	39	39.5	153,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.57	0.57	1,020,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	25.5	25.5	141,000
Philippine National Bank	23.75	24	23.75	24	23,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	5,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.75	14	12.75	14	43,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	1,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	500,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2020	2020	2020	2020	600
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	120,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1530	1535	1530	1535	860
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23	23	23	13,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	895	895	885	890	44,610
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.039	300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	10,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.34	10,263,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	935	940	935	940	41,940
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.75	19.25	19.5	21,900
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	32	31	31	448,500
Petron Corporation	3.2	3.5	3.2	3.45	17,097,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	15,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	37,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	25,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	56,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19	20	19	19.5	265,900
San Miguel Corp. A	55	55.5	55	55.5	27,100
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	68.5	68.5	68.5	35,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	7	7	7	7	5,000
Ayala Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	2,611,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	380,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	108,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	80,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.65	0.6	0.64	37,340,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.5	24	23.5	23.75	553,500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	5,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	200,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.08	9,829,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	10,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	13,670,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	350,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	13,500
Wellex Industries, Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1	1	1	1	2,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	70,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.5	144,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	23.25	23.25	22.75	23	286,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	2,514,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	40,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	320,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.1	2,967,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	70,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	190,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	82,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	46,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6	6	6	3,092,000
MINING					
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1	1	1	1	1,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	10,370,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	7,720,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	17,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	59,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1,400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.02	0.025	0.02	0.025	1,100,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	2,648,860	42,542,550.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	100,686,550	250,770,410.00
PRO	9,531,000	36,937,700.00
Mining	95,491,000	5,469,300.00
OIL	3,100,000	47,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	211,457,410	335,766,960.00

AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	435.04
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,287.89
PRO	547.94
Mining	1,581.68
OIL	1.26
SME	100.00
All Shares Index	948.97
Composite	1,479.28

DOWN 4.23
UP 6.44
UP 5.48
UP 37.68
UNCH 0.00
UNCH 0.00
UP 5.54
UP 2.24

NO. OF ADVANCES: 27, NO. OF DECLINES: 22, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 85, NO. OF TRADES: 2,152

INTEREST RATES

February 12, 2004-MART1

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 12-Feb-04	MART1 11-Feb-04
1 Month	6.7661	6.7446
3 Months	6.8143	6.8196
6 Months	7.9732	8.0929
1 Year	8.9577	8.9661
2 Years	9.7214	9.7304
3 Years	10.5839	10.5786
4 Years	10.8714	10.8679
5 Years	11.225	11.2214
7 Years	11.5429	11.5446
10 Years	11.8214	11.8286
20 Years	12.1786	12.1661
25 Years	12.4554	12.4554

SOURCE : MART/BLOOMBERG

CURRENCIES

February 12, 2004

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.779180	1.000000	55.872000
Japan	Yen	0.007398	0.009495	0.530500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.474053	1.891800	105.698600
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100287	0.128708	7.191200
Switzerland	Franc	0.633892	0.813537	45.453900
Canada	Dollar	0.593842	0.762137	42.582100
Singapore	Dollar	0.466453	0.598659	33.448300
Australia	Dollar	0.612370	0.785916	43.910700
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.066846	2.652590	148.205500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207776	0.266660	14.898800
Brunei	Dollar	0.465071	0.596872	33.346400
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000093	0.000119	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020025	0.025700	1.435900
UAE	Dirham	0.212143	0.272264	15.211900
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.283400	71.706100
Argentina	Peso	0.265479	0.340716	19.036500
Brazil	Real	0.267714	0.343584	19.196700
Denmark	Kroner	0.134205	0.172239	9.623300
India	Rupee	0.017257	0.022148	1.237500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205053	0.263165	14.703600
Mexico	New Peso	0.070983	0.091100	5.089900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.544652	0.699007	39.054900
Norway	Kroner	0.112612	0.144783	8.089300
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013646	0.017513	0.978500
South Africa	Rand	0.114710	0.147219	8.225400
Korea	Won	0.000672	0.000862	0.048200
Sweden	Kroner	0.109515	0.140552	7.852900
Syria	Pound	0.015129	0.019417	1.084900
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023576	0.030257	1.690500
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000407	0.000522	0.029200

Intercon group . . .

From page B20

ence growth in tourism, despite the volatile political climate brought on by the coming elections.

"We believe in the economic stability of the Philippines," North said. "We won't invest in a country if we don't believe it can provide good opportunities for business."

"We have been here for 35 years and we are here to stay," Imbardelli said. "We will continue to contribute to the development of the hotel industry."

The group's portfolio in the Philippines includes the Inter-Continental Manila in Makati City, Holiday Inn Galleria in Ortigas, and Holiday Inn Clarkfield in Pampanga.

Another hotel, the Crown Plaza Galleria, is scheduled to open in 2005.

RELENDING PROGRAM

JBIC set to grant P5-B soft loan to Quedancor

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation is set to provide a P5 billion loan to the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor), which would be used for relending to the rural sector.

The Japanese lending agency is now in the final stage of discussions with Quedancor and the National Economic and Development Authority's Investment Coordinating Committee over the terms of the loan.

"Availing ourselves of this loan with its soft terms will allow us to charge affordable interest on farmers' loans," said Quedancor president Nelson Buenaflor in an interview yesterday.

Aside from the JBIC, Quedancor expects to get fresh funds from commercial banks. These include the Allied Banking Corp., Philippine Veterans Bank, United Coconut Planters Bank and the Land Bank of the Philippines.

These banks lent to Quedancor to comply with the Agri-Agra law.

The law requires banks to set aside a portion of their loan portfolio to agriculture and agrarian reform projects.

"These participating banks bought the debt papers of our farmer-clients and this could pass as compliance for the required loans they need to invest in agriculture and agrarian reform-related projects," explained Buenaflor.

PVB recently opened a P150-million credit window to Quedancor, increasing its exposure to the state-run facility to P300 million.

Quedancor will offer these funds as loans to [illegible] employees, small farmers, fisherfolk, food retailers and rural and urban poor borrowers.

Quedancor chalked up a net income of P50 million last year, double the previous year's P25 million.

The state-run agency's earnings grew due to its 95-percent collection efficiency and increased funds from commercial banks.

Buenaflor reported that Quedancor's total lending portfolio stood at P2.7 billion as of December last year, short of the original lending target of P3.7 billion.

"We came short of target because we were not able to receive the needed funds from the Bureau of Treasury through the Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund," said Buenaflor.

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Bidding - March 15, 2004 at the Governors Office Mini conference Hall, Capitol, Ilagan, Isabela at 10.00 AM

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(PDI--Feb. 6 & 13, 2004)

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2 CHASING LIBERTY	7 HAUNTED MANSION	2 MILAN 11:20 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30	THX 2 MILAN 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30 11:00	2 MILAN
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EDDIE MURPHY

WALT DISNEY PICTURES presents

the Haunted Mansion

CHECK YOUR PULSE AT THE DOOR IF YOU HAVE ONE

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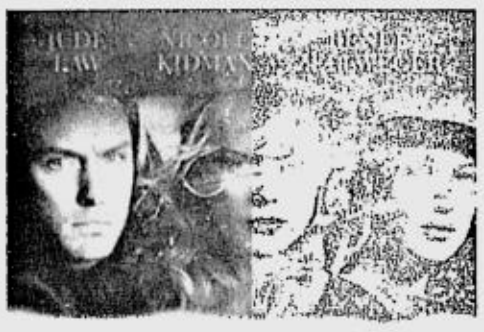
SHOWING TOMORROW!
at Pelikula at Lipunan SM MEGAMALL Cinema 6



SHOWING TOMORROW

12:30pm
GAY SHORTS
A Selection of shorts that explore the boundaries of the other sexes!

6:30pm
GREENLIGHTS
directed by
ROBERT H. LIEBERMAN

The rapturous love story that has stunned the critics!

COLD MOUNTAIN
TOMORROW ONLY AT 9PM, SM Megamall, Cinema 6

For inquiries call 4104545 / 7271961

OPENS FEBRUARY 25!
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JACK NICHOLSON DIANE KEATON KEANU REEVES

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CLAUDINE BARRETTO PIOLO PASCUAL
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GRADED B by the Cinema Evaluation Board
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
Ayala Cinemas. Beyond Movies.

SHOWING TONIGHT ONLY!
at Pelikula at Lipunan SM MEGAMALL Cinema 6

ALSO SHOWING TONIGHT

TONIGHT ONLY AT 9PM!
PINOY ROCK & RHYTHM
DENNIS EMPALMADO'S homage to filipino music's GOLDEN AGE!

ASTIG
ROBIN PADILLA, EPY QUIZON, ALESSANDRA DA ROSSI & other STARS in JON RED'S digital feature!
TONIGHT ONLY AT 7PM, SM Megamall, Cinema 6

For inquiries call 4104545 / 7271961

SHOWING TOMORROW!
at Pelikula at Lipunan SM MEGAMALL Cinema 6

GREENLIGHTS
A highly acclaimed comedy by Robert H. Lieberman!

SHOWING TOMORROW

3pm
POETIC SHORTS
The premiere screening of 4 new works from Mowelfund Film Institute

9pm
COLD MOUNTAIN
directed by
ANTHONY MINGHELLA

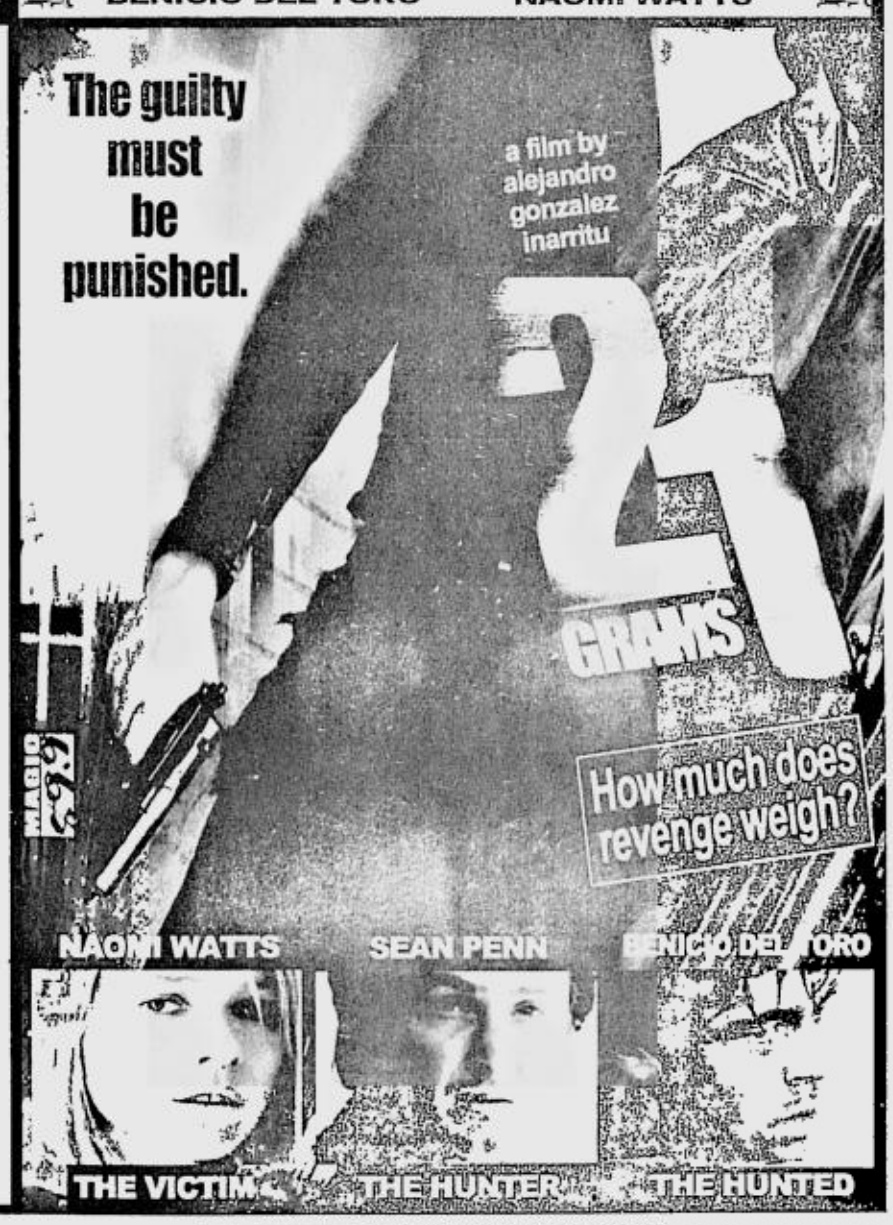
TOMORROW ONLY AT 6:30PM SM Megamall Cinema 6

For inquiries call 4104545 / 7271961

NEXT ATTRACTION

WINNER BEST ACTOR — 2003 Venice International Film Festival
WINNER BEST FILM OF THE YEAR, BEST ACTOR — 2003 National Board of Review
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Online Film Critics Society
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Los Angeles Film Critics Association
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Chicago Movie Critics
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 San Diego Film Critics
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Southeastern Film Critics
WINNER BEST PICTURE — 2003 NY Online Film Critics
WINNER BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Florida Film Critics
WINNER BEST ACTOR, BEST ACTRESS — 2003 Washington DC Film Critics

THE MOST TALK-ABOUT MOVIE OF THE YEAR
ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATIONS
BEST ACTOR — BENICIO DEL TORO
BEST ACTRESS — NAOMI WATTS



SHOWING ON FEB 15!
at Pelikula at Lipunan SM MEGAMALL Cinema 6

SHOWING TOMORROW

3pm
POETIC SHORTS
The premiere screening of 4 new works from Mowelfund Film Institute

9pm
COLD MOUNTAIN
directed by
ANTHONY MINGHELLA

EDADES
The new digital full-lenght film from acclaimed director NICK DEOCAMPO about VICTORIO C. EDADES, the father of Modernism!
ONLY ON FEB 15 AT 6:30PM SM Megamall Cinema 6

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MTRCB RATING PG-13 **"DESERT TERROR" EXPLODES FEB. 18!**
SAGAD SA BUTO... MABABALATAN KA SA TAKOT!

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POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City

MILAN PG13 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:20	HAUNTED MANSION GP 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40	MILAN PG13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
WISHING STAIRS R13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15 CHASING LIBERTY PG13 9:20	MONA LISA SMILE PG13 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50	CHASING LIBERTY PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 9 PM - MON. TO FRI.

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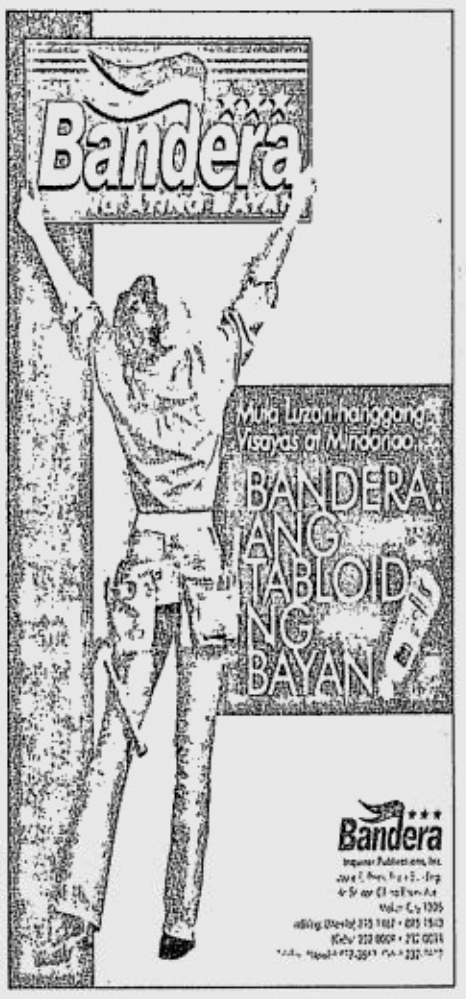

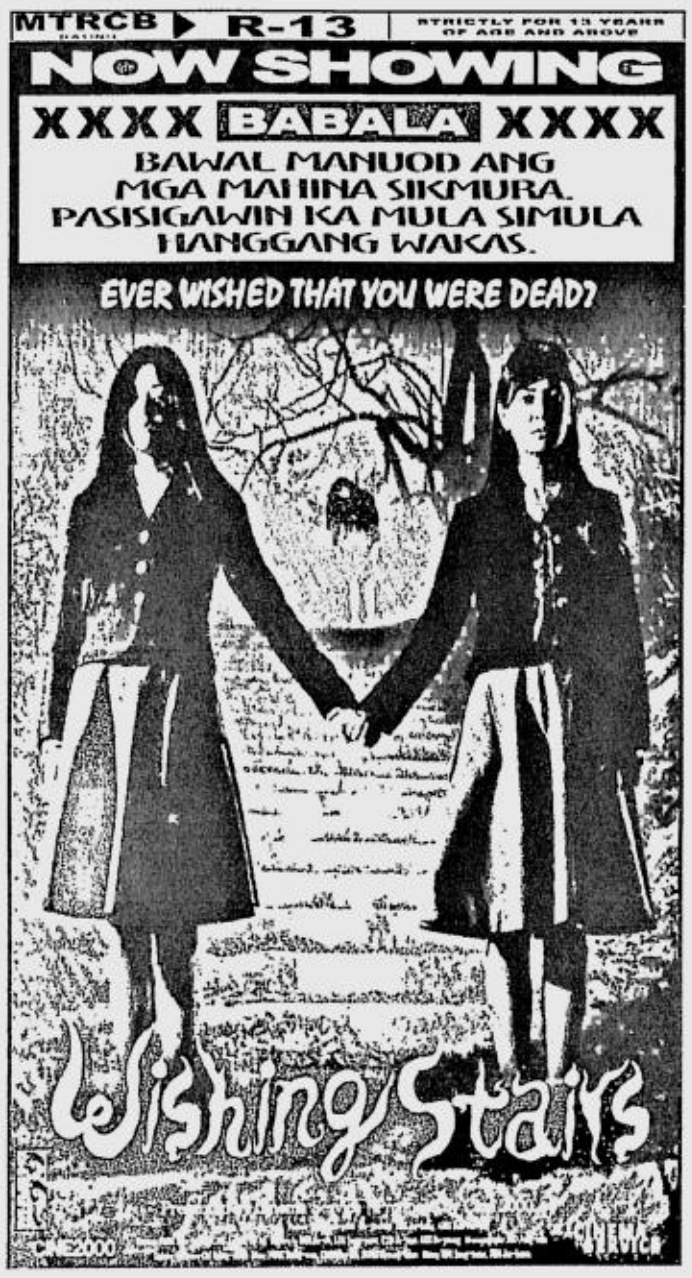

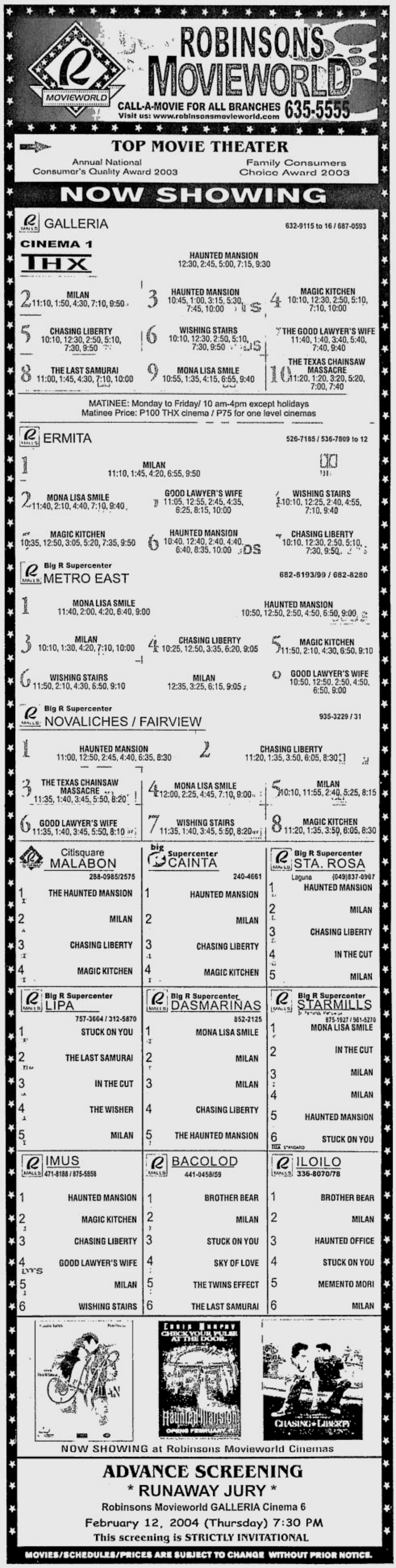

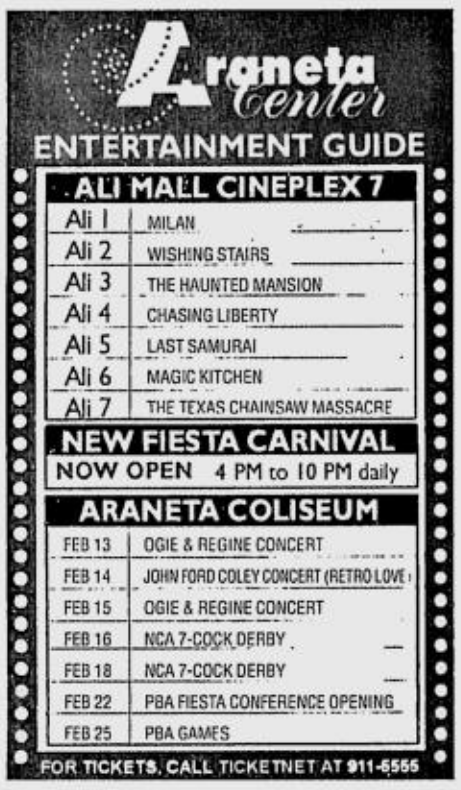

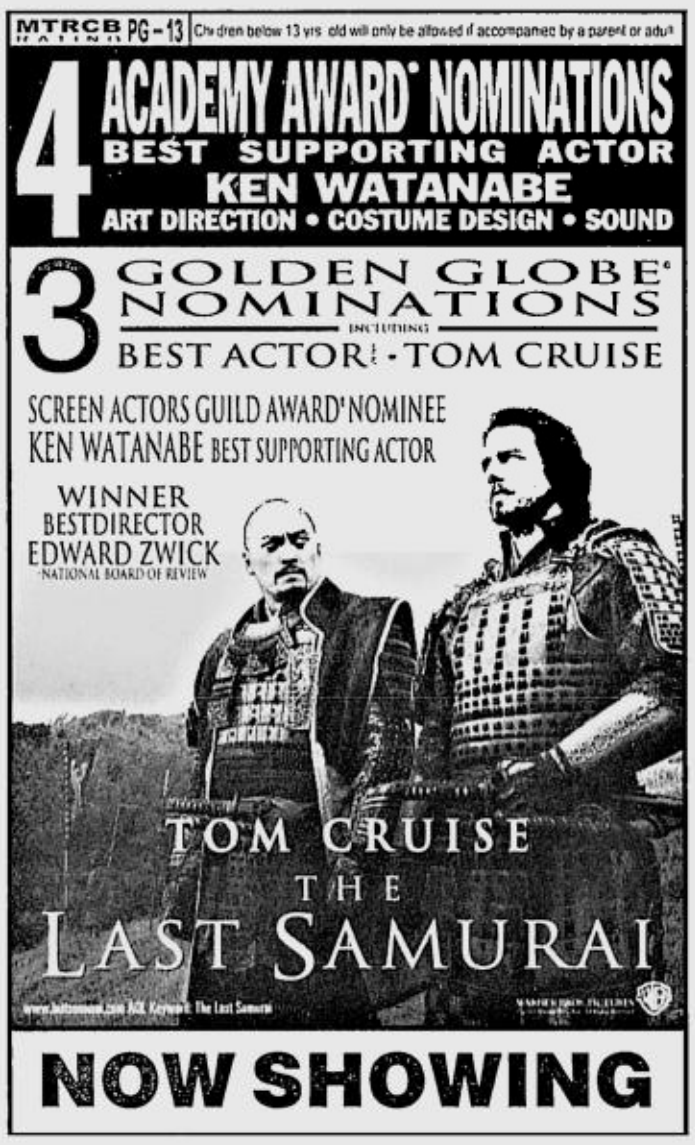

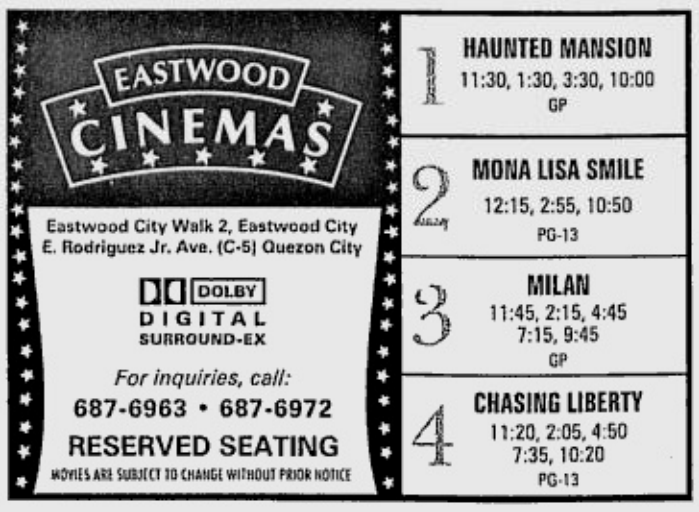

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The most interesting people and personalities leave their mark in the pages of the Sunday Inquirer Magazine

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Sunday INQUIRER magazine

MTRCB ▶ G — ALL AGES ADMITTED

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#1 ROMANTIC FILM IN ASIA!

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Magic Kitchen

A touching and hilarious story of someone torn between two lovers.

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ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATIONS

BEST ACTOR BEST ACTRESS

21 GRAMS

Starring Sean Penn, Naomi Watts & Benicio Del Toro

Directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu

Sean Penn in "21 GRAMS"

21 Grams which won for Sean Penn the Best Actor award at the Venice Film Festival, traces a circle of pain similar to the one in Mystic River, his other acclaimed film.

Paul (Penn) is a math professor whose life is saved by a heart transplant. He learns that the heart came from a man killed with his two daughters in a hit-and-run accident. He joins the man's widow (Naomi Watts of "The Ring") in seeking out the driver (Benicio Del Toro of The Hunted) and considering whether the inadvertent killer should live or die.

As counterbalance to today's facetious, preadolescent movie environment, however, these two dark, ambitous films have much to recommend them-and a lot in common. Both are ensemble pieces that intercut the activities and attitudes of three despairing people. Both pictures are, in a way, deeply Catholic statements about grieving- bearing the burden of death in the midst of life- and the ways to face and overcome it. ("Jesus didn't come to save us from pain," someone says in 21 Grams. "He came to help us bear the pain.") In both movies, a violent family loss forces Penn's character to decide which route to take- revenge or redemption. This subject plays to Penn's strength- dramatizing, incarnating and eloquently commenting on soul in rage.

"Revenge is a real easy one to get people interested in." Penn says. It's easy to be the firgurehead of the false courage by encouraging and leading revenge. But I sensed that these two directors (Eastwood and Inarritu) were not interested in just dazzling with the ugliest part of humanity and the quick fix."

21 GRAMS has won more than 12 majors awards as of January this year and it was nominated for the BEST ACTOR and BEST ACTRESS award at this year's Oscars.

ADVT. *Excerpt from TIME MAGAZINE.*

MTRCB ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

Julia Roberts dazzles in 'Mona Lisa Smile'

Ladies, give yourselves a special treat, and bring your sisters, classmates, girlfriends, Mom, or even a date, to see Julia's new movie.

Academy Award®-winner Julia Roberts heads a powerhouse cast with today's hot young Hollywood actresses - Kirsten Dunst (*Spider-Man*) and Julia Stiles (*Save the Last Dance, 10 Things I Hate About You*) - in an uplifting, heart-wrenching, and often-times funny drama.

Julia Roberts stars as Katherine, a teacher who challenges her bright female students, and discovers herself along the way.

Mike Newell, director of romantic comedy *Four Weddings & a Funeral,* megs a must-see movie to capture your heart and put a smile on your face.

Warming hearts at a theatre near you

NOW SHOWING

The scariest of them all.

Wishing Stairs

"Wishing Stairs" takes place in an all-girls academy, where Ji-seong (Ji-hyo Song) and So-hie (Han-byeol Park) are best friends. Despite their tight friendship, the two couldn't be any more different. So-hie comes from an affluent family and her future is ensured: Ji-seong lives in the school dorm and struggles with an unknown future. Their fortunes are upended when a possible scholarship to a Russian ballet school becomes available. Although both girls compete for the chance to continue their ballet career, it's known that So-hie has the connections. So what's a poor girl with big ambitions to do?

Ji-seong's "salvation" appears as the 29th step on the old stairway leading up to the school property. Although the stairway only has 28 steps, it's rumored that if one wants something badly enough, a 29th step will appear to them, allowing them to make a wish that is certain to come true.

Ji-seong takes the dive... she makes an evil wish after reaching the 29th imaginary step. The result is the death of her best friend, who later returns as a ghost in search of justice.

The ambience you'd expect to find in an Asian horror film is here, including but not limited to: slow pans to reveal the ghost in the background; said ghost having long black hair and standing perfectly still, hair draped over her face; said ghost crawling out of tight confines.

With a higher budget than most Asian horror movies and improvement in the special effects category (such as the fox stairs literally coming alive with stone faces and grappling arms). The film is made scarier than any horror films you have ever seen. Acclaimed Korean director Yun Jae Yon makes sure that the audience will be screaming with fright from beginning to end.

Wishing Stairs carefully combines local ghost legends with the hidden anxieties, petty cruelties and the conflicts between competitiveness and affection in the hearts of young women.

Wishing Stairs proved the staying power of Asian made horror movies at the box office by drawing more than 8 million viewers during the competitive holiday season in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand.

ADVT.

Relax, Watch A Movie!

Instituto Cervantes Warning
Love is Dangerous to your Health!
6 Spanish Love Stories

Juana La Loca . You're The One
Son De Mar . Sin Vergüenza
El Perro Del Hortelano
La Buena Estrella

February 9-15, 2004
Greenbelt 1 Cinema 1

ArtFilm

For inquiries, call 752 7865

AYALA CENTER
Feb. 20 - 5pm, 7pm
Feb. 21 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
Feb. 22 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Feb 27 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm
Feb 28 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm
Feb 29 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm

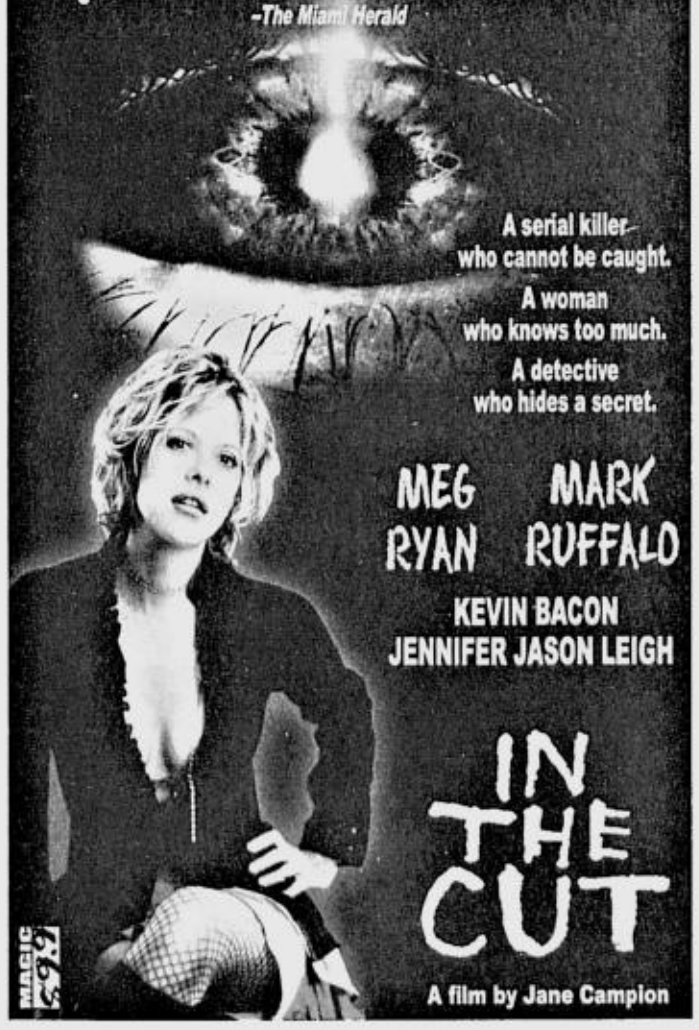
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Mar. 5 - 4pm, 7:30pm
Mar. 6 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
Mar. 7 - 11:30am, 3pm, 6:30pm

2ND WEEK

MTRCB ▶ R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS. No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted

Based on the bestselling novel by SUSANNA MOORE

"An erotic thriller capable of inducing nightmares and guaranteed to shock even hard boiled audiences."
-The Miami Herald



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2004

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

'Love, Actually' at The Podium

THE PODIUM and the British Council in cooperation with Smart Communications celebrate Valentine with Love, Actually, a poetry musical featuring the works of Britain's most passionate writers. This will be held on Friday, Feb. 13 at 6 p.m. at The Lounge at The Podium.

Love, Actually gathers together a group of brilliant young thespians: Roselyn Zaldivar-Perez, Jake Macapagal, Michelle Gallaga-Trinidad, and Lance Raymundo. The show, which is directed by Angie Magbanua, will also feature music by Bobby Gomez on the piano and Holly Angel Paraiso on the harp.

The romantic repertoire includes some of the most passionate lines from British literary giants like Shakespeare, Augden, Byron, Broiwning and Marlowe. Contemporary British poets also provide humor and wit to the repertoire, after all fun is the fragrance of love.

This ensemble presentation is complemented with love music from British musical greats like Andrew Lloyd Weber, the Beatles, George Harrison, Depeche Mode, Radiohead and the Irish group the Corrs. Love, Actually not only highlights the works of famous classical romanticists, but more importantly, contemporary artists who have risen to the forefront of British literature and music.

Roselyn Zaldivar-Perez, who took up a Shakespearean acting workshop at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, is a former stalwart of Repertory Philippines and is a founding member of Actor's Actors Inc. She last starred in Trumpets' production of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.

Jake Macapagal, who is back on a respite from the UK touring production of Miss Saigon, has starred in contemporary productions like Falsettos and Rent, as well as Hedgewig and the Angry Inch, where he played the lead.

Joining them are Michelle Gallaga-Trinidad and Lance Raymundo, who have both successfully, crossed over from pop music to the theater. Michelle, who was previously with the Madrigal Singers and a founding member of the band DV8 has since moved to Bacolod and taken on theater roles under the watchful eyes of her father Peque. Lance, who is a Viva Record artist, starred in Bulwagang Gantimpala's Romeo and Juliet before appearing in South Pacific and Café Vittorio.

Celebrate Valentine with lines and music from some of Britain's most passionate writers and musicians. Love, Actually is a joint project of the British Council and The Podium in cooperation with Smart Communications with Jam 88.3 and Wave 89.1

A CELEBRATION FOR A WORTHY CAUSE

The well respected and admired Estefania Aldaba-Lim celebrated her 87th birthday last Jan. 6 for the benefit of suffering displaced children in various parts in Mindanao. She turned over to Tabang Mindanaw co-chair Amb. Howard Dee, her birthday cash fund. Accompanied by her son, Alberto 'Bertie' Lim, chair of the Corporate Network for Disaster Response (CDNR), a Tabang Task Force member, Lim took time to listen to Tabang's humanitarian initiatives and development programs in Mindanao. Aldaba-Lim is a respected social worker and was the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. She is also the mother of broadcaster Che Che Lazaro. In photo are (from left): Marietta Alcid, CDNR project officer; Alberto Lim, CDNR president; Estafania Aldaba-Lim; TM co-chair Amb. Howard Dee and TM executive coordinator Merlie Mendoza.

NORTHWESTERN ALUMNI CLUB FETES NEW DTI SECRETARY

New Secretary of Trade and Industry Cesar Purisima, MBA '83 (seated, center), was honored at a dinner party by the Northwestern Alumni Club headed by president Jojo Poe III (standing, left) at the Manila Golf Club recently. Others in photo are: Ted Tordesillas, Toti and Isabel Juan, Evelyn Singson, Olive Villafuerte, Bibsy Carballo, Pauline Ick, Carol Dominguez, Jovi Bengzon, Billy Valtos, Ernest Cu, Dave Valdes, Chris Lim, Tony and Oli Jacinto, Giles Puno, Francis Laurel, Greg Navarro, Enrique Fernandez, Dave Balangue, Dave Chua, Cezar Yatco, Jay Silayan, Melchor Guerrero, Steve Gan, Jerry Uy, Glenn San Luis and Augusto Gonzales.

Most Outstanding Catholic Physician for 2003

THIS award was given to Conrado Banzon, MD, on Jan. 23 by the Catholic Physicians' Guild of the Philippines during its 2004 Annual Convention at the CME Auditorium, Medicine Building, University of Sto. Tomas.

MONEY BACK X 10 RAFFLE PROMOTION

Meralco was awarded with its prize money for being the winning merchant partner in the second weekly draw of Diners Club's 'Money Back X 10' raffle promo. The winning transaction was made by Paulino Lim, who used his Diners Club credit card to pay for his Meralco bills. The Money Back x 10 raffle promotion will still run until Feb. 20. Shown in the photo is Belen Lim, president of SB Cards Corp, awarding the check to Rafael Andrada, treasurer of Meralco, together with other representatives from Meralco and SB Cards Corp (the franchise owner of Diners Club in the Philippines).

BITS Clips

Mom's Radio February lineup

"MOM'S Morning Chat" of Southern Broadcasting Network's (SBN) FM radio division Mom's Radio outlines its child development program lineup in February. Formally launched in early 2003, Mom's Radio airs in six provinces: Bacolod (DYCP FM 90.3), Cebu (DYAP FM 88.3), Davao (DXSS FM 97.9), Laoag (DWSN FM 97.9), Vigan (DWIS FM 98.9) and Cagayan de Oro (DXNY FM 107.9). "Mom's Morning Chat" is the 2003 CMMA choice for the Best Radio Educational Program. Among the discussions to watch out for are topics including "Teaching Our Children To Express Themselves with Ease" (Feb. 17), "Appropriate Discipline Techniques Per Stage Of Development" (Feb. 20) and "Effective Storytelling" (Feb. 21). For more information on "Mom's Morning Chat" and Mom's Radio, call SBN at 636-3286-90 or e-mail hrcs@sbnphilippines.net.

UST Commerce '79 reunion

THE BATCH is organizing a big get-together bash for all alumni of the UST College of Commerce. Be there. Get in touch with old friends, network or simply have fun. For details, call Lilibeth Nieva at 952-0717 or 0917-8359396, Liwayway Delos Santos at 898-1111, 898-1139 or 0919-8126579, or Raffy Haulo at 523-0921 or 0919-7914751.

Love at Eastwood City

THIS February, Eastwood City toasts lovers and romantics alike with its "Serenades of the Heart." The Eastwood Central Plaza is transformed into a lovers' venue as the country's hottest singers and performers provide the perfect ambiance for a passionate evening. Feb. 13 showcases acoustic sensation Nyoy Volante with Mannos beginning 8:30 p.m. On Feb. 14, Hawaii-based guitarist and balladeer Jesse Rivera performs timeless love songs and sentimental melodies. On Feb. 18 and Feb. 25, MYMP (Make Your Momma Proud) alternates with Thor in dishing out soothing jazz and acoustic melodies from 8:30 p.m. onwards at the Fuente Circle. On Feb. 26, fast-rising bands Sunburn, Overtone and Stonefree put a spin on classic rock and alternative and folk rock music starting 8:30 p.m. Eastwood City Walk is located at E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue, (C-5), Quezon City. For details, call 687-6770.

'Loving for a Lifetime'

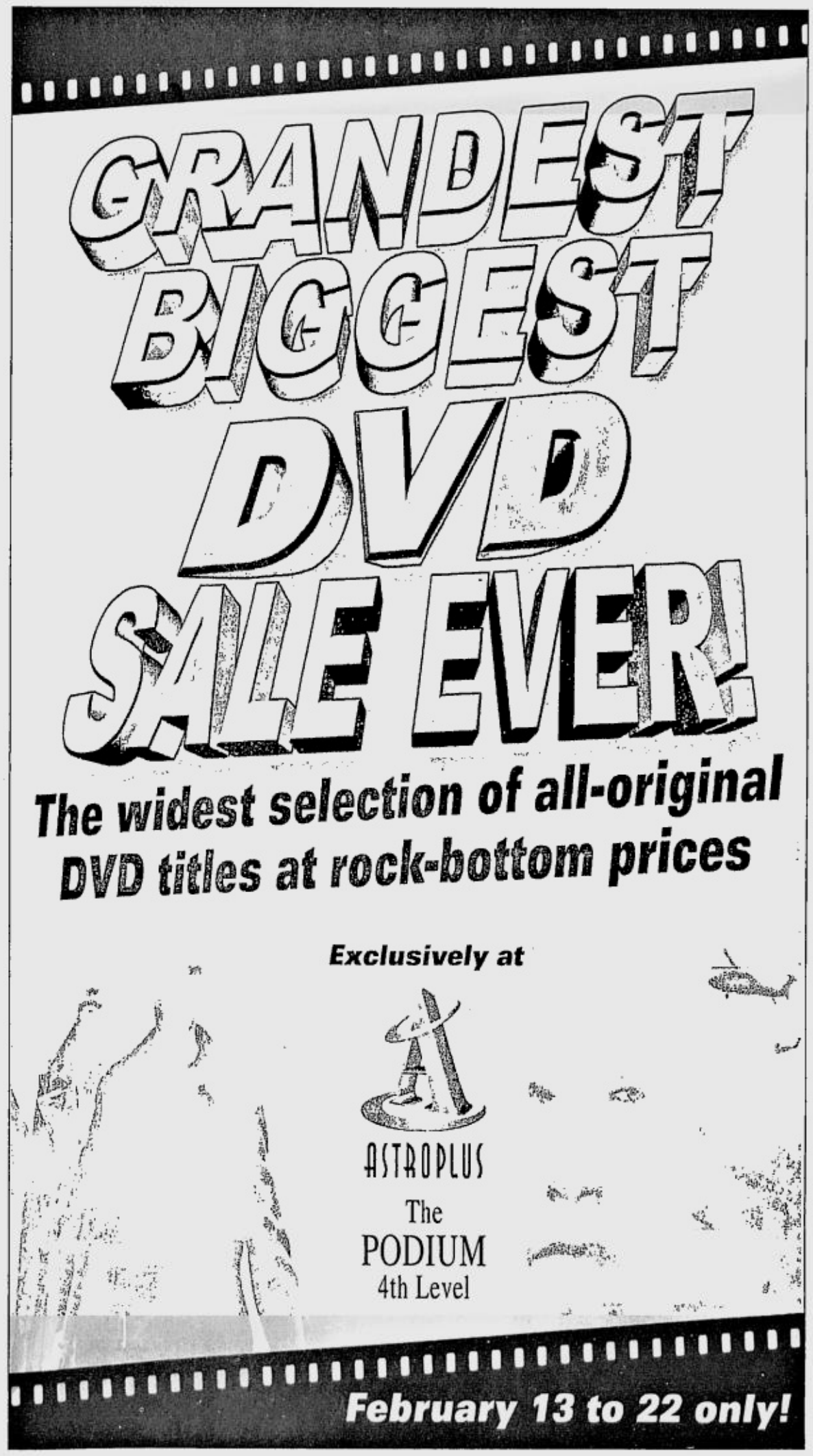
CSM PUBLISHING will be holding a special pre-Valentine event titled "Loving for a Lifetime" on Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. at Powerbooks Greenbelt, 2nd floor, Greenbelt 4 Building, Ayala Center, Makati City. The event will be hosted by Hazel Alvis of 702 DZAS. The highlight of the night's program is the special talk by Dr. Jennifer Harley Chalmers, author, licensed psychologist and marriage counselor, and internationally known speaker. All married couples and singles wanting to get married are invited to come. Admission is free. Text CSM<space>FGL then send to 2299 to get a chance to win a special book package of "The Four Gifts of Love." For inquiries, call CSM at 512-1501 to 04.

MEMOrable Valentine

BEHIND every successful man is a MEMOrable lady. This Valentine, Memo celebrates the magic of love with melt-in-the-mouth Cadbury chocolate bars for the ladies. From Feb. 13 to 15, a minimum purchase of P1,000 worth of Memo apparel (single receipt) entitles all lady shoppers to enjoy a Cadbury Chocolate Mousse 150g bar. Fall in love with the latest Memo collection-stylish, elegant yet perfect wardrobe styles that will take you from 9 to 5 and beyond. Why not get your man a Valentine gift from Memo? He'd surely love the shirt, the chocolate and above all, the lady behind those sweet surprises. Memo boutiques are located at The Shops Greenhills, SM Megamall, Glorietta 3-Makati, SM Southmall, SM Pampanga, SM Cebu and Filinvest Alabang and take advantage of this irresistible treat.

Road rules at Handlebar

HANDLEBAR takes you and your date for the ride of your life as it hosts Session Road on Feb. 13. Come join a night of music, food and, of course, motorcycles. Session Road is a Baguio-based band playing a mix of genres from pop to blues to world music. The band is composed of vocalist/ rhythm guitarist Hannah Romawac, drummer Chavi Romawac, percussionist and back-up vocalist JV, lead guitarist Coy Placido, bassist Jal Taguibao, and keyboardist Jesse Hoover. Regardless of whether you are a motorcyclist or not, the Handlebar atmosphere is warm and friendly, the staff is attentive and the beer is cold. Check out Handlebar at 31 Polaris Street, Bel-Air, Makati City. For directions, call 898-1976 or visit http://www.handlebar.com.ph.



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

EN BANC

IN THE MATTER OF THE MEMORANDUM OF THE LAW DEPARTMENT RELATIVE TO THE CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY FOR THE POSITIONS OF PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT AND SENATOR IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 ELECTIONS.

x- x

Chairman Benjamin S. Abalos, Sr.
Commissioner Rufino S.B. Javier
Commissioner Mehol K. Sadain
Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra
Commissioner Florentino A. Tuason, Jr.

Promulgated:

11 February 2004

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION NO. 6604

Before US are **Motions for Reconsideration/ Oppositions** filed by the following candidates for the positions of President, Vice-President or Senator:

1. Rev. Elly Velez Lao Pamalong [SPA (MP) 04-001]
2. Criscela Diamante Policarpio-Agudo [SPA (MP) 04-002]
3. Atty. Renato Gasmen and Prince Julian Morden Tallano [SPA (MP) 04-003]
4. Andres Ugboc [SPA (MP) 04-004]
5. Greg Salas Taruc [SPA (MP) 04-005]
6. Camilo Villarta Tiqui [SPA (MP) 04-006]
7. Eliseo F. Soriano [SPA (MP) 04-007]
8. Eduardo "Ed" Flaminiano [SPA (MP) 04-008]
9. Elias B. Dulalia [SPA (MP) 04-009]
10. Jacinto P. Dominguez [SPA (MP) 04-010]
11. Atty. Francisco M. Tajanan [SPA (MP) 04-011]
12. Leonardo A. Polinar, Arcadio S. Alberto & Agustin B. Cabredo [SPA (MP) 04-012]
13. Fatima Jovita "Jovy" G. Fulgencio [SPA (MP) 04-013]
14. Ernesto A. Bermudez [SPA (MP) 04-014]
15. Rev. Segundo C. Pasaylon [SPA (MP) 04-015]
16. Dean Rolando A. Carbonell [SPA (MP) 04-016]
17. Leopoldo San Juan Salud [SPA (MP) 04-017]
18. Cetura Anacetas Aguilar [SPA (MP) 04-018]
19. Arsenio T. Dimaya [SPA (MP) 04-019]
20. Ramon B. Concepcion [SPA (MP) 04-020]
21. David Torralba Alimorong [SPA (MP) 04-021]
22. Clemente de Guzman [SPA (MP) 04-022]
23. H.K. Judge Philip Morriss S. Tolibas [SPA (MP) 04-023]
24. Era C. Trinidad [SPA (MP) 04-024]
25. Alex N. Jungaya [SPA (MP) 04-025]
26. Danilo M. Mangao [SPA (MP) 04-026]
27. Antolin Velasco Garcia [SPA (MP) 04-027]
28. Luzminda R. Peñaranda [SPA (MP) 04-028]
29. Vicente N. Biego [SPA (MP) 04-029]
30. German Tupaz Valladarez [SPA (MP) 04-030]
31. Atty. Mar T. Reyes [SPA (MP) 04-031]
32. Pedro R. Tadeo [SPA (MP) 04-032]
33. Bartolome P. Padilla [SPA (MP) 04-033]
34. Rodrigo Lapitan [SPA (MP) 04-034]
35. Jose Monte De Ramos [SPA (MP) 04-035]
36. Engr. Andresito "Bata" Deligero [SPA (MP) 04-037]

Once again, the noble right of suffrage is used as cloak to serve the caprices of a few who want to mock our democratic processes as the May 10, 2004 National and Local Elections approaches. This Commission will never be 'an instrument to such inclinations since it is duty-bound to uphold the time-honored principle of *vox populi, vox dei.*

The Constitution and some legislative fiats expressly imposed upon the Commission on Elections (the "COMELEC") the sanctified obligation to enforce election laws and conduct peaceful, orderly and honest elections. In the fulfillment thereof, the COMELEC is vested with a correlative authority to disqualify a candidate who has no genuine intention to run for public office but whose main objective is to impede the determination of the true choice of the electorate or to put the election process in mockery. This power is clearly stated in Sections 68 and 69 of the Omnibus Election Code, to quote:

***SECTION 68. Disqualifications** – Any candidate who, in an action or protest in which he is a party is declared by final decision of a competent court guilty of, or found by the Commission of having (a) given money or other material consideration to influence, induce or corrupt the voters or public officials performing electoral functions; (b) committed acts of terrorism to enhance his candidacy; (c) spent in his election campaign an amount in excess of that allowed by this Code; (d) solicited, received or made any contribution prohibited under Sections 89, 95, 96, 97 and 104; or (e) violated any of Sections 80, 83, 85, 86 and 261, paragraphs d, e, k, v, and cc, subparagraph 6, shall be disqualified from continuing as a candidate, or if he has been elected, from holding the office. Any person who is a permanent resident of or an immigrant to a foreign country shall not be qualified to run for any elective office under this Code, unless said person has waived his status as permanent resident or immigrant of a foreign country in accordance with the residence requirement provided for in the election laws.*

***SECTION 69. Nuisance candidates.** – The Commission may, motu proprio or upon a verified petition of an interested party, refuse to give due course to or cancel a certificate of candidacy if it is shown that said certificate has been filed to put the election process in mockery or disrepute or to cause confusion among the voters by the similarity of the names of the registered candidates or by other circumstances or acts which clearly demonstrate that the candidate has no bona fide intention to run for the office for which the certificate of candidacy has been filed and thus prevent a faithful determination of the true will of the electorate.*

Section 69 indicates that aside from complying with the constitutional and legal requirements for candidacy, a prospective candidate must demonstrate that he does not fall under the category of a nuisance candidate.

Moreover, the right of suffrage, although a constitutionally-guaranteed right, is not absolute because the exercise thereof requires some conditions precedent to the end that the true will of the electorate will be protected. Relatively, the Supreme Court in the case of *Albanil vs. J.P. of Bacolod, 70 Phil. 28,* enunciated that:

"Suffrage should be exercised not exclusively for the benefit of the citizen or class of citizens professing it, but in good faith and for the benefit and welfare of the state. The privilege is a public trust to be performed for the good of the people". (Emphasis ours)

Lastly, suffrage is not purely a matter of right but a matter of reality with respect to the capability of a candidate to sustain a nationwide campaign.

Notedly, several Motions for Reconsideration/ Oppositions were filed out of time.

Prescinding therefrom, the Commission, after carefully evaluating the pleadings including documentary evidence thereof, submitted in connection with the disqualification of the mentioned candidates, **RESOLVED** as it hereby **RESOLVES** to **DENY** the motions for reconsideration and to **AFFIRM** COMELEC Resolution No. 6558 disqualifying the following candidates:

1.	Rev. Elly Velez Lao Pamalong	President
2.	Criscela Diamante Policarpio-Agudo	Vice President
3.	Atty. Renato Gasmen	President
4.	Prince Julian Morden Tallano	Vice President
5.	Andres Ugboc	President
6.	Greg Salas Taruc	Vice President
7.	Camilo Villarta Tiqui	President
8.	Eliseo F. Soriano	Senator
9.	Eduardo "Ed" Flaminiano	President
10.	Elias B. Dulalia	Vice President
11.	Jacinto P. Dominguez	President
12.	Atty. Francisco M. Tajanan	President
13.	Leonardo A. Polinar	President
14.	Arcadio S. Alberto	Senator
15.	Agustin B. Cabredo	Senator
16.	Fatima Jovita "Jovy" G. Fulgencio	President
17.	Ernesto A. Bermudez	Senator
18.	Rev. Segundo C. Pasaylon	Vice President
19.	Dean Rolando A. Carbonell	President
20.	Leopoldo San Juan Salud	President
21.	Cetura Anacetas Aguilar	President
22.	Arsenio T. Dimaya	Vice President
23.	Ramon B. Concepcion	President
24.	David Torralba Alimorong	President
25.	Clemente de Guzman	President
26.	H.K. Judge Philip Morriss S. Tolibas	President
27.	Era C. Trinidad	Senator
28.	Alex N. Jungaya	President
29.	Danilo M. Mangao	President
30.	Antolin Velasco Garcia	President
31.	Luzminda R. Peñaranda	President
32.	Vicente N. Biego	Vice President
33.	German Tupaz Valladarez	President
34.	*Mariano/Mario T. Reyes	President
35.	Pedro R. Tadeo	Senator
36.	Bartolome P. Padilla	President
37.	Rodrigo H. Lapitan	President
38.	Jose B. Monte De Ramos	President
39.	Andresito "Bata" Deligero	Senator

* Atty. Mar Reyes per his motion for reconsideration/opposition filed with COC

for the reasons that they cannot wage a nationwide campaign, and/or are not nominated by a political party or are not supported by a registered political party with national constituency.

Let a copy of this resolution be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

The Law Department is hereby directed to implement this resolution with dispatch and to prepare the Certified List of Candidates for the positions of President, Vice-President and Senators.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RUFINO S.B. JAVIER
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner
I maintain my vote on Mr. E. Pamalong.

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

(PDI–February 13, 2004)

QUIRINO HS BATCH MARKS 40

The Quirino High School Class of 1964 will celebrate its 40th graduation anniversary and homecoming from Feb. 13 to 15. Activities have been lined up to mark the occasion. Shown are the members of the steering committee (seated, from left) Becky Cerojano-Patrimonio, Dulce Vicencio, Evelyn Moreo, Rory Navarra and Carol Sobrichea. Standing, from left, are Buddy Dayrit, Dave Hilario, Nonie Ceguerra, Erwin Ortile and Ding Dayrit. For details, jubilarians can call 920-6950 or 912-2369.

'DEVOTED' PROMISES TO BE DAZZLING

All of Manila is bracing for the concert event of the season. Three of the music industry's finest and most seasoned solo vocalists-Basil Valdez, Kuh Ledesma and Zsa-Zsa Padilla-come together in 'Devoted', heralding an unprecedented concert experience, a troika of pure talent and musical prowess. Devoted is set to go onstage at the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza on Feb. 13 and 14. Dinner starts at 7:30 p.m., show starts at 9:30 p.m.

A DIFFERENT VALENTINE CELEBRATION

Instead of its traditional Valentine's Party, the Reaching Out for the Lord (ROL) Series of the Tuklasan Sector will visit the Chosen Children's Village to donate food, toys, clothes and other household amenities on Sunday, Feb. 15. ROL is calling on all ROL encountered couples to join and participate. For further inquiries, call Gerry-Gina Martinez at 0918-9119680 or 871-5141, and Dong-Emie Lalic at 0918-9280293 or 872-3275.

HEART FAILURE MEET

Lecturers and participants call time for a photo-op during the first part of the Unilab Medical Education (Umed) conferences on cardiology on Feb. 2 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City, which discussed heart failure. The speakers were noted world figures in cardiology: Dr. John O'Connell from the United States, Dr. Andrew Coats of Australia, and Filipino specialist Dr. Romeo Divinagracia. Shown in the group are Umed executive director Dr. Edgardo Ortiz and officers of the conferences co-sponsor medical organizations. Umed is a program of United Laboratories designed to advance the knowledge and skills of Filipino physicians, whose ultimate beneficiaries are their patients.

BITS Clips

Sta. Elena date

LEAVE the hustle and bustle of the city for a rare opportunity to indulge your senses. On Feb. 13 and 14, Sta. Elena offers a masterful five-course dinner prepared by culinary couple Ramon and Monica Eugenio of Connections Catering Company at the Balinese gardens of Banahaw Village, located at the center of Sta. Elena's lush Audubon-certified Forests & International award-winning championship Fairways. Acoustic guitar and violin strings will serenade you over dinner while the soulful artistry of May Bayot, Romy Jorolan and Acoustic Jive will have you dancing by the end of the night. The 15-minute drive from Alabang will certainly be worth it. For inquiries, call Sta. Elena Properties at 886-6178 and 79.

'Totally in Love'

GET READY to be in love as Southborder hits Subic with a Valentine concert dubbed "Totally in Love with Southborder" on Feb. 13 at the Softball field of SBMA in Subic, Zambales with special guest Toni Gonzaga. The event is presented by Manels Total Department Store and RRJ in cooperation with Manels, Inquirer's On the Road, Strepsils and 90.7 Love Radio.

Acoustic night at CSB

BRIAN Melissa C. Culanay and Brian Carlo V. Sta. Ana have recently formed an acoustic tandem called The Package Deal, offering a wide repertoire from jazz to soul, R&B to alternative rock. The duo's musical selections have the influences of Patti Austin, Angela Bofill, Sheryl Crow, Lisa Loeb, Stevie Wonder, Joe Pass, Earl Klugh, Red Hot Chili Peppers and John Mayer. On Feb. 13, The Package Deal and The Gentry will perform at the CSB Hotel International Conference Center starting at 7 p.m. Called "Acoustic Night", the Pre-Valentine Special of the hotel will be held at its International Hall with set dinner priced at P350 net per person. The evening will be capped by ballroom and disco dancing. For more details on the show and the hotel's current promos, call 400-3333 local 503, 502, 511 or fax 400-5455.

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Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE GAS SUPPLY AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT (GSPA) FOR INCLUSION IN THE RECOVERY MECHANISM

ERC CASE NO. 2004- _____

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC) and POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PSALM)
Applicants
x----------x

APPLICATION

APPLICANTS **National Power Corporation (NPC) and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM)**, through the undersigned counsel and unto the Honorable Commission, respectfully state:

1. Applicant NPC is a government-owned and controlled corporation created and existing under and by virtue of Republic Act No. 6395, as amended, with principal office address at the NPC-Office Building Complex, corner Quezon Avenue and Agham Road, Diliman Quezon City.
2. PSALM is a government-owned and controlled corporation, created and existing by virtue of **Republic Act No. 9136** or the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" (R.A. No. 9136), with principal office address at 2/F SGV Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
3. That this Application is a joint filing of NPC and PSALM. NPC is filing this Application in its capacity as owner of record of all existing generation assets and energy, and as the applicant and implementing agency for the unbundled generation rates approved by the Honorable Commission in its Order dated **September 6, 2002** in ERC Case No. 2001-901 and the Orders dated May 15, 2003 and January 26, 2004 in ERC Case No. 2003-156. It is mandated under its Charter to undertake the development of hydroelectric generation of power and the production of electricity from nuclear, geothermal and other sources of energy in order to attain, among others, the objective of providing adequate and reasonable price of electric power nationwide. Applicant PSALM is filing this Application in its capacity as administrator of the generation assets of NPC under R.A. No. 9136 and the transferee and owner of these assets pursuant to Section 49 thereof.
4. That this Application is respectfully filed in compliance with the Honorable Commission's Orders dated **May 15, 2003** and dated **January 26, 2004** in ERC Case 2003-156, requiring the Applicants to submit the Gas Supply and Purchase Agreement (GSPA) for the sale and purchase of Natural Gas executed on December 30, 1997 between Shell Philippines Exploration B. V. (Shell) and Occidental Philippines, Inc. (Oxy) both referred as "Seller" and NPC referred as the "Buyer" for the Honorable Commission's approval. A certified true copy of the GSPA is hereto attached as *Annex "A" and series.*
5. The authority of the Honorable Commission to review and approve the GSPA stems from Section 20 of Republic Act No. 8479 or the Act Deregulating the Downstream Oil Industry, which provides:
   "Section 20. Jurisdiction on Pricing of Piped Gas – Section 3 of Executive No. 172 is hereby amended to read as follows:
   Section 3. Jurisdiction, Powers and Functions of the Board. – The Board shall, upon proper notice and hearing, fix and regulate the rate schedule or prices of piped gas to be charged by duly franchised gas companies which distribute gas by means of underground pipe system."
   and the Interim Rules and Regulations Governing the Transmission, Distribution and Supply of Natural Gas:
   "Rule 9 – Supply Sector
   Section 1 – Guiding Principle – The supply of Natural Gas to Customers is subject to the permitting authority of the DOE for a specific geographic area and the ratemaking powers of the ERC."
6. Under the terms of the GSPA, applicant NPC purchased the specified quantity of natural gas from the Sellers for the generation of electricity in the Ilijan Natural Gas Combined Cycle Power Plant (Ilijan Power Plant) located at Ilijan, Batangas City, Batangas.
7. The Ilijan Power Plant, in turn, is under a Power Purchase Agreement/Energy Conversion Agreement entered into between NPC and the Korean Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) for the generation and supply of the power requirements of applicant NPC. The aforesaid Agreement is now the subject of pending petition by NPC before the Honorable Commission for its inclusion in the Fuel and Purchase Power Adjustment Clause (FPCA) docketed as ERC Case No. 2001-814.
8. The provisions of GSPA ensures reasonable costs for applicants and ultimately enhance public interest as the utilization of natural gas as source of power enables applicants to meet its mandate of providing reliable, adequate and reasonably priced electricity to the public.
9. It is just and reasonable that applicants be able to recover its costs under the GSPA to lessen its worsening financial condition. The delay in the recovery and the non-inclusion of the cost of Natural Gas under the GSPA of Applicants' cost recovery mechanism have accumulated in the total amount of P11,178,736,248.87 covering the period from October 2001 to August 2003. Its approval by the Honorable Commission will only result to a minimal increase in Applicants' tariff of about PO. 1734/kWh.
10. Pursuant to Section 4 (e) of Rule 3 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R. A. No. 9136, attached herewith are the following:
    a. Certification issued by the City Secretary of the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Quezon City as Annex "B".
    b. Certification issued by the City Secretary of the Sangguniang Panglungsod of the City of Makati as Annex "C".
    c. Two (2) copies of the Application as published in the Philippine Star and Philippine Daily Inquirer, newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, as *Annexes "D" and "E".*

WHEREFORE, it is most respectfully prayed that this Application for the approval of the GSPA for inclusion in the Applicants' cost recovery mechanism be GRANTED.

Applicants pray for other relief just and equitable under the circumstances.

Quezon City for Pasig, February 9, 2004.

FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL:

(Sgd.) RAINER B. BUTALID
VP-General Counsel
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP No. 607115/01-13-04/Quezon City
PTR No. 50044162/01-8-03-4/Q.C.
Roll No. 31612

(Sgd.) COMIE P. DOROMAL
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP No. 594567/10.17.03/Quezon City
PTR No. 50643246/01.14.04/Quezon City
Roll No. 24988

(Sgd.) MELCHOR P. RIDULME
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP Life No. 01748, Ilocos Sur
PTR No. 50393992/01.14.04/Q.C.
Roll No. 37784

(Sgd.) RONALD DYLAN P. CONCEPCION
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP Life No. 04995/Rizal
PTR No. 292829/01.05.04/Mandaluyong
Roll No. 40065

(Sgd.) GORDON SY MONTOJO
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP No. 563776/01.09.03/Q.C.
PTR No. 38310063/01.09.03/Q.C.
Roll No. 44910

Counsels for Applicant NPC
4th Flr., NPC Bldg., Cor. Quezon Avenue and BIR Road, Diliman, Q.C.

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PSALM)

(Sgd.) MARIA LUZ L. CAMINERO
VP-General Counsel
IBP No. 590825/09.11.03/Q.C.
Roll No. 35714

(Sgd.) CECILIO B. GELLADO, JR.
Department Manager
IBP No. 578612/01.03.03/Q.C.
Roll No. 30354

(Sgd.) MARIA BELEN P. MONTES-NERA
IBP No. 578039/01.22.03/Q.C.
Roll No. 37737

Counsels for Applicant PSALM
2nd Floor, SGV II Building
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

(PDI - Feb. 13, 2004)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Deed of Adjudication
Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Mila Alado-Bonites consisting of one-half share in Unit P-3 of the Garden Heights situated at E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City was adjudicated equally among her heirs Cecilio Bonites and Schienalyn Bonites as per deed entered as Doc. No. 3673; Page No. 18; Book No. LXXIX; Series of 2003 in the Notarial Register of Atty. Antonio A. Bisnar of Roxas City
(PDI- February 13, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Zoila Lalucis was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. No. 604; Page No. 61; Book No. XV, Series of 2004 as per Notary Public Atty. Danie M. Cortina
(PDI-Feb. 13, 20 & 27, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Meralco Stock Cert. 285600A under the name Gregorio C. Aruelo Jr. was lost. If no contest is receive new certificate will be issued.
(PDI-Feb. 13, 20 & 27, 2004)

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EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF ESTATE WITH ADJUDICATION

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late CASTOR LAVARIAS and FELOMINA ESCORPIZO, consisting of two (2) parcels of agricultural land, namely: Lot 1045-C-2 and Lot No. 1045-C-5, both Psd-02-058145, and portions of Lot 1045-C (LRC) Psd-146750, containing an area of 40,000 sq.m. each, covered by TCT Nos. T-300199 and T-300200, respectively, both situated in the Barrio of Nabbuan, City of Santiago, Isabela, are the subject of an Extra-Judicial Settlement of Estate with Adjudication executed by their heirs before Notary Public Eladio C. Velasco, of Asingan, Pangasinan per Doc. # 478 Page # 96 Book # II Series of 2003.
(PDI – Feb. 6, 13 & 20, 2004)

Estate Sale

EVERYTHING MUST GO!
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Bella Vista Executive Hills Subdivision
Taytay, Rizal near Rustans Express
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More Classified Ads on pages B7, B9 and B16

ERRATUM

In the ad of the COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS published in this paper February 7, 2004 re: **Resolution No. 6420-A:** Promulgated date **5 February 2004** was omitted.

Our apologies.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
website: www.afp.mil.ph
email: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in the 2-stage bid process for the **Construction and Delivery of Two (2) Multi-Purpose Attack Crafts (MPACs)** of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of **One Hundred and Forty-Five Million, Four Hundred and Forty Thousand Pesos (Php 145,440,000.00).** The said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program CY 2002 Funds.

Only bids from MPAC shipbuilders/manufacturers duly accredited by Marina or its foreign equivalent shall be entertained.

The 1st stage bid documents shall only be available for issuance starting **February 06, 2004 until March 11, 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of **Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 14,500.00),** which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the 1st stage bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **February 18, 2004** at **9:00 AM (local time) at the Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City**. Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than three (3) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for **Submission of 1st Stage Bid Envelopes** will be on **March 12, 2004** at **9:00 AM (local time)** to be immediately followed by the **Opening of Bids** at the Silid Panday Pira. Only those bidders found to be eligible shall be allowed to participate in the 2nd stage bidding activities.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) JOSE N. FERRER JR
Chairman, DND-BAC

(PDI – February 6 & 13, 2004)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, SERGING OSMEÑA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 2323401-04, FAX NO. (032) 2321990
E-MAIL: pparo7@cvis.net.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Ports Authority through the Port District of Visayas invites interested bidders to submit Application to apply for eligibility, and subsequently to bid, if pre-qualified for the:

I.

A. Name of project : REMOVAL OF TRANSIT SHED AND IMPROVEMENT OF STORAGE AREA PORT OF TACLOBAN, TACLOBAN CITY

B. Scope of Work

I	Demolition of Port Police Bldg. & Fence	Minor	VI	Demolition of Engineering Bodega	Minor
II	Demolition of Concrete Pavement (133.20 cu.m.)	Minor	VII	Demolition of Various Trees (19.0 units)	Minor
III	Demolition of 12m x 42m Transit Shed 1	Minor	VIII	Concreting of Storage Area. 1800 sq m.	Major
IV	Demolition of 12m x 30m Transit Shed 2	Minor	IX	Demolition of Passenger Terminal Bldg.	Minor
V	(non-women) water separator (12,360.0 sq.m.)	Minor			

C. Minimum Equipment Requirements:

1.0	1 unit	Air Compressor 250-300 cfm	Owned	7.0	1 unit	Pneumatic Jackhammer	Owned
				8.0	1 unit	Payloader, 3 cu.m. Cap	Owned/Leased
2.0	1 unit	Concrete Cutter	Owned	9.0	1 unit	Power Chain Saw	Owned
3.0	2 units	Concrete Mixer, one bagger	Owned	10.0	1 unit	Road Grader, 135 Hp cap.	Owned/Leased
4.0	2 units	Concrete Vibratorr	Owned	11.0	1 unit	Road Roller with Compactor, 35T cap.	Owned/Leased
5.0	2 units	Cutting Outfits	Owned	12.0	1 unit	Transit Mixer, 3 cu.m. cap (min)	Owned/Leased
6.0	2 units	Dump Truck, 10 cu.m. cap	Owned	13.0	1 unit	Truck Mounted Crane, 25 tons capacity	Owned/Leased

D. Budget for the Contract : P 10,164,400.00
Source of Funding : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : 168 Calendar Days

E. Required PCAB Registration & Classification : Medium "A" Road & Highway Pavement

Bid Documents shall be issued only to eligible licensed contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents of Ph. 2,000.00.

F. Experience:
Similar in nature and complexity with at least 50% of the approved budget for the Contract to be bid and 50% of the major items of work

G. Cost of Pre-qualification or Eligibility Form : P 200.00
Place of Issuance : Philippine Ports Authority, Port District - Visayas, BAC Secretariat, CIP Complex, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City

H. Last day of Issuance of Pre-C Forms : March 01, 2004

I. Deadline of Submission of Accomplished Pre-C/Eligibility Forms : March 08, 2004

Only contractors classified and registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) on Contractor's License and Registration Particulars will be issued Eligibility Forms. The Forms are available at the BAC Secretariat, CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. Interested applicants are required to bring a letter of intent and original copy of Contractor's valid PCAB License for verification/authentication purposes.

All particulars relative to the pre-qualification, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the RA 9184.

Further information may be obtained from the following:
BAC Secretariat : Tel. No. (032) 232-3401
PPA Website : www.ppa.com.ph
www.cvis.net.ph/ppa

The Authority reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the proposals received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the Philippine Ports Authority.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL T. GORME**
Port District Manager

(PDI--February 13 & 20, 2004)

PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE
Air Logistics and Support Command
HEADQUARTERS 420th SUPPLY WING, PAF
, Clark Air Base, Philippine Air force
(Air Force City)
Angeles City, Pampanga

NOTICE OF SALE BY PUBLIC BIDDING

The PAF Disposal Committee will receive sealed bids until 02 March 2004, 10:00 AM at Conference Room, 420th Supply Wing, PAF Clark Air Base, Angeles City, Pampanga for the sale of the following unserviceable on "As Is Where Is" basis.

Lot Number/Description	Location	Min Bid Price
01-249-020 One (1) SF-260 Aircraft Nr 703 and SF-260 Assorted Aircraft Carcasses	Disposal Yard, Basa Air Base, Floridablanca, Pampanga /AETC, Fernando Air Base, Lipa City	P513,050.00
5-283-022 Ten (10) T-28 Engines with canister	Disposal Yard, Basa Air Base, Floridablanca, Pampanga	P450,000.00
5-283-023 Eight (8) T-28 Engines w/o canister	Disposal Yard, Basa Air Base, Floridablanca, Pampanga	320,000.00
Four (4) ea elevated water tanks	Col. Jesus Villamor Air Base, Pasay City	P466,789.35

REMINDERS TO BIDDERS:
1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding.
2. To submit bid in PAF official bid form.
3. Earnest money is required in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to (10%) of the minimum bid price
4. To be on time. No bid will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commence.
5. Pre bid conference and issuance of Bid forms (P200.00 per set) will be on **24 February 2004**, 2:00 PM at 420th SW Conference Room, Clark Air Base, Angeles City, Pampanga.
6. Inspection schedule will be from 16-23 February 2004, from 0800H to 1600H, Monday to Friday.

PAF DISPOSAL COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, AND TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE PAF.

For details and schedule of inspection call Cpt. Bienvenido J. Casaclang PAF at (045) 599-2015 loc 6524 or mobile 09167210260.

(Sgd.) **RUBEN C. ESTEPA**
Brigadier General, AFP
Wing Commander/Chairman
PAF Disposal Committee

(PDI--Feb. 13, 14 & 15, 2004)

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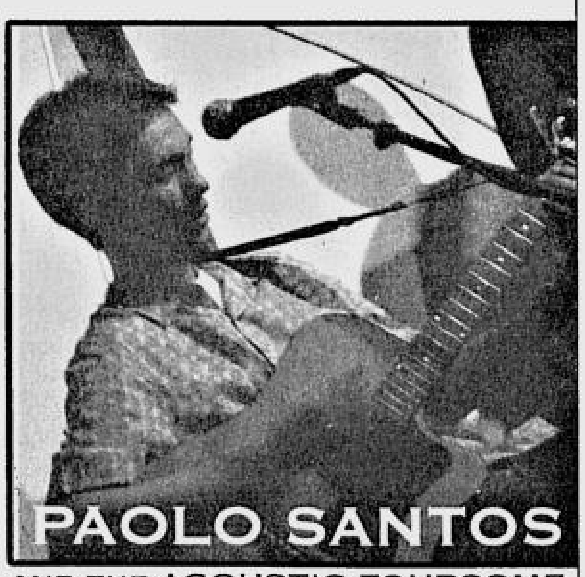

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In Loving Memory
on the First Death Anniversary of

CESAR R. CALVO

who joined his Creator on February 13, 2003

We, the family and relatives sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and condoled with us in our moment of grief.

In Loving Memory of

BIENVENIDO G. ZERNA

of San Fernando and Angeles City, Pampanga

who joined our Creator on February 11, 2004 at the age of 65.

His loving wife **Ma. Luz**; children **Marilen & Glenn**, and **Joma**; siblings **Carding, Nene** and **Erning**; and mother-in-law **Felisa** request for your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Angelina Memorial Chapels, Sto. Rosario St., Angeles City. Interment will be on Saturday, February 14, 2004 at the Christ The King (Magliman) Memorial Park after the 8 A.M. Mass.

REMEDIOS (NENE) ALBA SANTIAGO

IPINANGANAK : NOVEMBER 17, 1913
SUMAKABILANG BUHAY : FEBRUARY 12, 2004

ALA-ALA NG MGA PAMANGKIN, APO AT HIPAG **FELICIDAD C. SANTIAGO** (MAESTRANG IDAD).

PAKIKIRAMAY MULA SA OPISYALES AT EMPLEYADO NG ANGAT AT DOÑA REMEDIOS RURAL BANK.

ILILIBING SA LINGGO, IKA 15 NG PEBRERO, ALAS DOS NG HAPON SA ANGAT, BULACAN.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." — John 3:16

CLASSIFIEDS

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-001

PD Ref. No.: PB040114-EL0001

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
I	WIRELESS MODEM (GSM) FOR C & I REVENUE METERS	80 SETS	P 2,500,000 00
II	DATABASE SERVER INTEL XEON W/ RACK	1 PC	P 500 000 00
III	LASERJET PRINTER	8 UNITS	P 320,000 00
IV	MOBILE PC	5 UNITS	P 500,000 00
V	MOBILE PC	2 UNITS	P 250,000 00
VI	MOBILE PC	1 UNIT	P 150,000 00
VII	DESKTOP PC	3 UNITS	P 560 000 00
VIII	DESKTOP PC	3 UNITS	P 216,000 00
IX	PRINTER MEMORY	1 PC	P 3,000 00
X	GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS)	10 UNITS	P 200,000 00
XI	DIGITAL CAMERA	4 UNITS	P 120,000 00
XII	DIGITAL CAMERA	1 UNIT	P 27,000 00
XIII	LCD PROJECTOR	1 UNIT	P 250,000 00
XIV	AUTOCAD LT 2004 FULL PRODUCT	1 UNIT	P 88 000 00
XV	SPSS BASE 11.5 OR 12.0 (STANDALONE)	1 UNIT	P 85 900 00
XVI	VISUAL STUDIO NET PROFESSIONAL	1 UNIT	P 18 000 00
XVII	TOAD STANDARD EDITION 7.0	1 UNIT	P 48 000 00
	TOTAL		P 5,788,900.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the attached Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid is ***P5,835,900.00*** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting ***February 6-27, 2004*** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials, Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on ***February 18, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.*** at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before ***10:00 a.m. of March 01, 2004*** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 8 & 13, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID
NON-IMPACT PRINTER CONSUMABLES, RENTAL OF UPS EQUIPMENT & SALE OF POS TERMINALS

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

1. Supply and delivery of various Non-Impact Printer (NIP) Consumables
   Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P6,500,000.00
   Source of Fund : Interim Budget for EDP Supplies
   Contract Duration : Thirty (30) calendar days
2. Proposed Rental of one*(1) unit 200 KVA Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) to be installed at the Power House of the SSS Main Office, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
   Prospective bidders should have at least three (3) years of experience on projects which are similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid.
   Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P3,600,000.00
   Source of Funding : Equipment Rental - UPS
   Contract Duration : One (1) Year
3. Sale of one (1) lot (for actual verification) POS Terminals as supported by waste material reports and inventory and inspection reports, on "as-is where-is" basis
   Location: SSS Main Building East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
   Minimum Bid Price : P2,000,000.00

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements (for item #1 only)	Feb. 13 to 27, 2004	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of the following: • Eligibility requirements (item #1) • Eligibility requirements (item #2) • Letter of intent (item #3)	 March 03, 2004 March 03, 2004 March 03, 2004	BA C Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee, as follows: • Item #1: P5,000.00 • Item #2: P1,000.00 • Item #3: P500.00	 March 08, 2004 March 08, 2004 March 09, 2004	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-bid Conference • Item #1 • Item #2 • Item #3	 March 10, 2004 2:00 PM March 10, 2004 3:00 PM March 15, 2004 2:00 PM	Bidding Room, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491.

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposals is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - Feb. 13, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-004

PD Ref. No.: PB040115-EL0007

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
I	PORTABLE METER TEST EQUIPMENT	7 SETS	P 18,200,000.00
II	METER SEAL	10,000 PCS.	P 375,000.00
III	METER BOX	30 PCS.	P 450,000.00
IV	METER TEST	30 PCS.	P 405,000.00
TOTAL			P 19,430,000.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is ***P19,430,000.00*** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting ***February 13, 2004 to March 4, 2004*** at The BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on ***February 25, 2004*** at 10:00 a.m. at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before ***10:00 a.m. of March 8, 2004*** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 13, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
MANILA

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Interested DISTRIBUTORS / DEALERS are invited to apply for eligibility and bid for the supply and delivery of One Thousand Five Hundred (1,500) units of Bundy Clock for the Lower Courts. Complete delivery shall be within Forty Five (45) days after issuance of Purchase Order.

The approved budget for the contract is Thirty Million Pesos (P30,000,000.00) chargeable against Judiciary Development Fund.

Interested bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or COB Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Prospective distributors / dealers may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, Supreme Court, after payment of a non-refundable fee of **Eight Hundred Pesos (P800.00).** For additional information contact the Secretary, Atty. Ennar C. Cabanilla at Telefax 4042731 or Norma C. Josue at Telefax 5247425.

I. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative on February 27, 2004 at exactly 2:00 p.m., 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Bldg., Supreme Court.

II. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference of eligible bidders shall be on March 3, 2004 at 2:00 p.m., 3rd Floor Session Hall, Old Bldg., Supreme Court.

III. OPENING OF BIDS

Bids of eligible bidders will be accepted and opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives on March 17, 2004 at 2:00 p.m., 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Bldg., Supreme Court.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

February 12, 2004.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI–February 13 & 20, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
P.O. Box 70, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City
TIN 000-784-336-000
Tel. No. 929-6837

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) through its Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items to be delivered to different points in the Philippines:

VARIOUS FARM MECHANIZATION AND POST HARVEST MACHINERIES AND EQUIPMENT
(BRAND NEW AND RECONDITIONED)
for Sugar-ACEF Related Projects (6th Public Bidding)
Approved Budget for the Contract - Php 38,041,842.00

Schedule of Bidding Activities

Issuance of Eligibility & Bidding Documents	**February 19, 2004 - March 9, 2004** 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM SRA Bidding Secretariat 3rd Floor Annex Building Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City for a non-refundable fee of Php 1,000.00
Pre-Bid Conference	**February 25, 2004**; 9:00 AM Social Hall, Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Submission & Opening of Eligibility & Bid Envelopes	**March 11, 2004**; 9:00 AM Social Hall, Sugar Regulatory Administation North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

All particulars relative to the Eligibility, Bid bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contracts shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable government rules and regulations.

The SRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bids.

The SRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein or accept any bid(s) or offer(s) which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JAMES C. LEDESMA**
Administrator

(PDI - Feb. 13 & 20, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Quezon City

February 5, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

I.	Name of Project	:	Supply and Installation of Changeover Switch of Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS) of Emergency Generator Set of the BIR-NOB
	Location of the Project	:	BIR National Office Building
	Delivery Schedule	:	Thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of Notice of Award
	Approved Budget	:	P520,750.00
	Source of Funding	:	BIR's Appropriations
II.	Name of Project	:	Supply and Installation of 6300 Ampere Main Air Circuit Breaker of Bank No. 2 and Improvement of Ventilation of Low Voltage Enclosed Metal Switchgear and Powerhouse
	Location of the Project	:	BIR National Office Bilding
	Delivery Schedule	:	Thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of Notice of Award
	Approved Budget	:	P1,093,440.00
	Source of Funding	:	BIR's Appropriations

All interested parties may get the bidding documents from the BAC Secretariat, c/o Procurement Division at Room 605, 6th Floor, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City starting **February 9, 2004,** upon payment of non-refundable fee of:

Project No. I – P500.00
Project No. II – P500.00

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **February 20, 2004** at 9:00 a.m., at the **3/Floor, Executive Conference Room, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City.**

Deadline for the submission and opening of eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be on **March 3, 2004** at **1:30 p.m.** at the **3/Floor, Executive Conference Room, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City,** and followed by the opening of the bids.

The criteria to be used by the BIR in the following: (a) eligibility check of prospective bidders; (b) examination and evaluation of bids; and (c) post-qualification, shall be on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis.

The BIR assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any excuse or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bid. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any of the required formality therein and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

For particulars, please inquire from the BAC Secretariat, thru the Chief, Procurement Division at Room 605, 6th Floor, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone nos. 926-55-47, 926-55-38 and 928-20-26 (fax), or e-mail us at nelly.ibo@bir.gov.ph until March 2, 2004.

(Sgd.) **MILAGROS V. REGALADO**
Assistant Commissioner-Legal Service
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–February 13, 2004)

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Intercon group puts up service center in RP

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has invested $6 million in the Philippines to put up the biggest customer service center in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Manila Customer Service Center, which started operations in October last year, attends to clients of IHG, one of the world's leading hotel service providers.

According to Patrick Imbardelli, IHG managing director for the Asia-Pacific, the Manila Customer Service Center was established to service the growing number of clients of the company.

The chain already has 150 hotels in 22 countries in the region, and it is expecting to open several more hotels within the year, Imbardelli said.

Imbardelli said the new hotels are meant to address the expected increase in demand for hotel services in the Asia-Pacific.

"Tourism in different parts of the world is increasing," he said during the launching of the Manila Customer Service Center Tuesday. "2004 should be the best year since 2000."

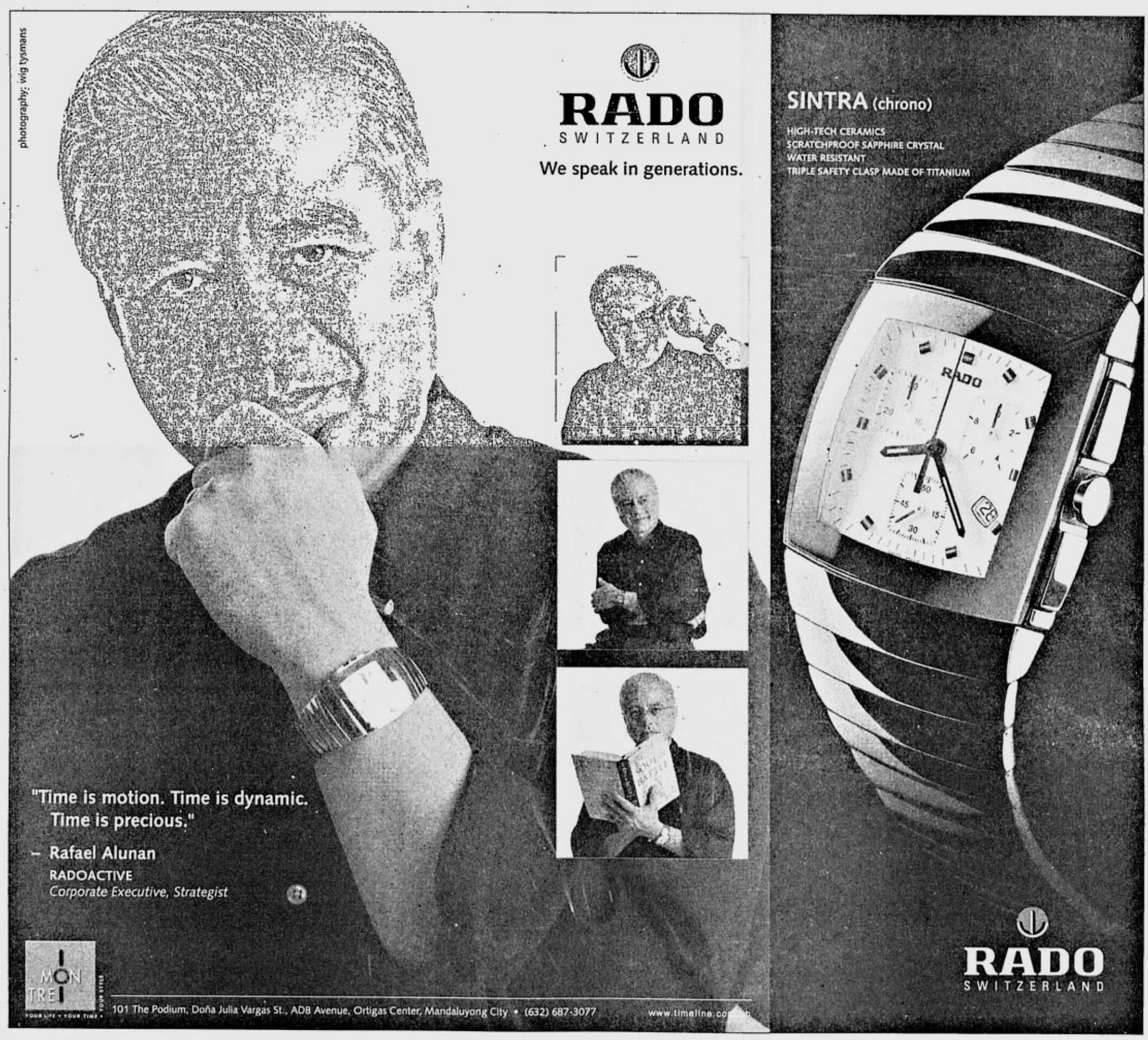
Imbardelli noted that the demand for leisure and resort hotels has been steadily growing in the Asia-Pacific.

Occupancy rate in the region stands at 70 percent, he said.

IHG expects demand to grow this year in most parts of Asia, including the Philippines, he added.

According to IHG chief executive Richard North, the Philippines would continue to experi-

INTERCON/ B8



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BANKING Quarterly

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Bank consolidation seen in uncertain '04

By Clarissa S. Batino

BANKS have a way of transforming crises into opportunities and this is exactly how they intend to cope with a year fraught with uncertainties.

And now more than ever, the central bank is renewing its call for increased consolidation in the banking sector to create fewer but stronger players that can withstand political and economic shocks.

The political uncertainty has already plunged the peso to an all-time low of 56.20 to $1 on Feb. 3. Moody's Investors Service has downgraded the country's credit rating by a notch to Ba2 and kept a negative outlook. An influential American pension fund is planning to strike out the country from its investment menu. And comparisons between the Philippines and Argentina have again surfaced due to the country's swollen debt levels.

In the banking sector, lenders are still hobbled with huge amounts of non-performing assets—a combination of soured or non-performing loans and seized assets also known as real and other properties owned or acquired (Ropoa).

Unfortunately, the level of bad loans and foreclosed assets have not gone down substantially even a year after Congress passed a law that provides tax breaks to the Special Purpose Vehicles or SPVs.

On the bright side is the passage of RA 9238 or the law that exempted banks and financial institutions from the 10-percent value-added tax alongside doctors and lawyers. Banks are again subject to the 5-percent gross receipts tax.

Also, the Senate passed on third reading a bill that would clarify the tax exemption of offshore banking units and banks' foreign currency deposit units. If passed into law, OBUs and FCDUs would be exempt from all taxes except a final tax of 10 percent on onshore income.

But even with the tax measures, the banking business would still be under pressure.

So even before the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas could renew its call for mergers, Banco de Oro quietly concluded a deal with the Social Security System during the final days of 2003 for the purchase of the latter's 29-percent stake in third-largest Equitable PCI Bank.

Although the subject of a Senate investigation, the deal is being touted as the forerunner in the new wave of consolidation that must happen in the banking sector that has more than 1,000 players, of which 42 are commercial banks, about a hundred are thrift banks and the rest are rural and cooperative lenders.

"Anything that will lead to a consolidation is a welcome development for the BSP. We want to see five major banks and the rest have to be niche players," said BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

The central bank chief considers only two banks currently as major forces. He said that if BDO would merge with Equitable, there would be three. Once Philippine National Bank shall have completed its rehabilitation, it could qualify as the 4th force.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. is the biggest bank with P462.11 billion in total assets followed by Bank of the Philippine Islands with P343.6 billion. A merger between Equitable PCI and Banco de Oro could dislodge BPI from

BANK/ B2-3

Go for risk-free investments, bankers say

THE UNSTABLE economic environment brought about by the run-up to the May elections has pushed businessmen at the sidelines, waiting for the right time to invest. Uncertain of what the investment climate would be like after the elections, some have thought it best to hold on to their money at least until after the elections.

But for those whose appetite to invest remains, bankers recommend that clients choose virtually risk-free and secure instruments.

INQUIRER Banking Quarterly's Michelle V. Remo gives us the details of what the following bankers have to say about making safe investments.

Ador Abrogena
SVP for trust banking
Banco de Oro

"WHAT Banco de Oro can recommend to clients who are looking for an investment outlet depends on how much they are willing to invest and the degree of risk that they are willing to take. For example, if a client has P100,000 a common trust fund like the Premium Growth Fund would be suitable. We invest these funds as a pool. These are invested in high quality credits such as government securities, prime corporate loans, deposits, and similar fixed income instruments.

A bonus feature of this fund is that it qualifies for reduced taxes if a client keeps his money for at least three years and tax exemption after five years. We have a similar fund, the Premium Income Fund that is invested the same way but pays out interest monthly, ideal for those who need regular earnings.

These funds are highly liquid, safe and provide an income that is usually higher than deposits or even short-term treasury bills.

For clients wanting to invest in US dollars, we have the Smart Money Dollar Fund and the Smart Money Dollar Fund-Gold. These are also common trust funds that are invested mostly in Philippine government dollar bonds, high grade Philippine issues and deposits.

For those willing to invest over the long term, we recommend corporate bonds such as the recent issues of Ayala Corp. and Globe, which provide a yield of 10-11.5 percent a year for a 5-year term. You will, however, be subject to credit risks (the risk of default) and market risk (the risk that you might need to sell when bond prices are down).

For high net worth individuals with at least P5 million portfolio, we offer the Wealth Planner account."

Bienvenido Juat
External VP–treasurer
Equitable PCI Bank

"BANKING products and services have evolved in such a way that depositors and investors have a wider spectrum of instruments available to them, such as short-term and long-term instruments that are denominated in different currencies.

Equitable PCI Bank offers deposit and investment products that allow the depositor or investor to choose the appropriate financial instruments/securities based on his/her appetite for both risk and reward.

The bank also offers third-currency deposits such as those for euro and Japanese yen.

A depositor or investor can consider the steep yield curve of peso interest rates, which means a significant differential between short- and long-term interest rates.

Common trust funds are available to investors who wish to diversify their investments in fixed income securities and equities through a pooled funds. An investor may also opt to open a revocable trust account called Prime Life Investment which combines the benefits of fixed income and equity investments. Investors who can tie up peso funds over the longer term and take higher risks can invest in long-term.

Dollar-linked peso notes (DLPNs) are another type of medium-term government security with returns linked to the movements of the US

GO FOR/ B2-3

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Total Assets of Commercial Banks (3rd & 4th quarters 2003 & 4th quarter 2002)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	Q4 '03	Q3 '03	% Change	Q4 '02	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	462,114,529,834	436,304,407,330	5.9%	433,809,690,978	6.5%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	343,600,178,039	333,999,900,349	2.9%	332,362,312,115	3.4%
3	3	Equitable PCI Bank	279,809,333,437	279,441,441,126	0.1%	260,939,264,367	7.2%
4	4	Land Bank of the Philippines	269,103,366,426	259,687,766,773	3.6%	248,485,097,457	8.3%
5	6	Philippine National Bank	203,393,480,582	199,302,198,713	2.1%	185,511,339,226	9.6%
6	8	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	152,769,715,510	144,007,793,924	6.1%	156,236,882,687	-2.2%
7	7	Development Bank of the Philippines	148,292,926,289	144,383,613,233	2.7%	151,003,817,077	-1.8%
8	9	Banco de Oro	145,174,423,330	132,513,714,786	9.6%	119,985,888,430	21.0%
9	11	Allied Banking Corporation	110,187,523,612	104,212,361,287	5.7%	103,889,994,934	6.1%
10	10	China Banking Corp.	104,439,711,074	105,529,226,385	-1.0%	106,319,021,134	-1.8%
11	12	United Coconut Planters Bank	98,062,051,722	93,489,779,025	4.9%	98,636,161,624	-0.6%
12	13	HSBC	81,601,253,745	75,078,584,362	8.7%	75,202,911,355	8.5%
13	14	Union Bank of the Philippines	78,167,727,745	73,330,924,099	6.6%	73,309,878,567	6.6%
14	15	Security Bank Corp.	73,053,624,447	68,821,706,029	6.1%	63,810,558,623	14.5%
15	17	Prudential Bank	51,628,462,895	48,154,710,150	7.2%	48,070,935,218	7.4%
16	18	Bank of Commerce	50,566,623,494	47,686,264,168	6.0%	38,385,615,572	31.7%
17	16	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]	45,640,747,354	50,091,987,913	-8.9%	46,650,673,116	-2.2%
18	20	International Exchange Bank	43,758,370,336	41,293,373,749	6.0%	39,259,371,127	11.5%
19	21	Philippine Trust Co.	37,614,704,972	37,013,142,168	1.6%	33,436,878,912	12.5%
20	19	Standard Chartered Bank	37,245,388,874	41,840,653,934	-11.0%	40,008,714,605	-6.9%
21	22	Export and Industry Bank	27,216,560,742	26,660,839,027	2.1%	26,146,607,635	4.1%
22	24	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	23,011,392,260	22,549,020,014	2.1%	20,193,700,375	14.0%
23	25	International Commercial Bank of China	21,770,675,509	21,912,607,435	-0.6%	22,540,188,317	-3.4%
24	27	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	18,835,437,787	17,949,630,847	4.9%	16,249,980,998	15.9%
25	23	Deutsche Bank AG[b]	18,599,860,018	22,741,854,264	-18.2%	22,138,051,505	-16.0%
26	26	ING Barings	18,414,583,449	18,804,226,226	-2.1%	15,081,898,815	22.1%
27	29	East West Bank	18,309,007,396	16,879,084,248	8.5%	14,984,543,312	22.2%
28	28	Asia United Bank	17,770,357,710	16,921,903,477	5.0%	14,542,416,381	22.2%
29	30	United Overseas Bank	16,313,071,828	16,500,697,249	-1.1%	15,367,352,934	6.2%
30	31	Philippine Veterans Bank	14,805,455,226	13,699,949,169	8.1%	13,920,743,827	6.4%
31	32	Mizuho Corporate Bank	13,923,772,805	11,687,813,190	19.1%	12,367,679,626	12.6%
32	33	Maybank Phils. Inc.	11,320,654,726	11,299,929,683	0.2%	11,280,127,693	0.4%
33	36	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	9,422,361,956	8,869,025,458	6.2%	10,018,035,464	-5.9%
34	34	ABN-Amro Bank	8,027,809,464	10,380,226,145	-22.7%	10,407,839,862	-22.9%
35	37	Bank of America	7,068,205,476	7,704,568,693	-8.3%	8,365,857,316	-15.5%
36	35	JP Morgan Chase Bank	7,008,752,510	9,818,182,848	-28.6%	10,868,864,805	-35.5%
37	38	Korea Exchange Bank[c]	6,866,554,049	6,712,076,509	2.3%	6,296,443,925	9.1%
38	39	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.[a]	5,975,739,301	5,065,382,406	18.0%	6,200,622,532	-3.6%
39	40	Bangkok Bank	3,600,890,348	4,363,302,239	-17.5%	4,274,066,706	-15.8%
40	41	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	100,174,783	86,210,457	16.2%	96,353,642	4.0%
	5	Citibank[e]		215,349,805,264	-	216,911,477,265	-
		GRAND TOTAL[f] Php	3,084,586,461,058	2,985,790,079,089	3.3%	2,916,658,392,814	5.8%

Total Capital Accounts of Commercial Banks (3rd & 4th quarters 2003 & 4th quarter 2002)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	Q4 '03	Q3 '03	% Change	Q4 '02	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	52,294,854,120	52,075,228,663	0.4%	50,609,889,924	3.3%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	50,959,344,914	51,130,813,614	-0.3%	50,010,237,898	1.9%
3	3	Equitable PCI Bank	42,415,703,118	42,177,403,878	0.6%	40,960,136,217	3.6%
4	4	Philippine National Bank	23,639,025,019	23,689,664,680	-0.2%	23,837,039,475	-0.8%
5	5	Land Bank of the Philippines	23,250,878,288	22,114,152,466	5.1%	20,855,366,921	11.5%
6	6	Development Bank of the Philippines	19,102,501,636	19,405,443,168	-1.6%	18,998,612,273	0.5%
7	7	China Banking Corp.	17,667,183,775	17,158,256,006	3.0%	15,148,801,025	16.6%
8	8	Union Bank of the Philippines	15,305,820,559	15,276,954,766	0.2%	13,311,227,923	15.0%
9	9	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	15,223,993,559	15,217,953,165	0.0%	15,459,928,341	-1.5%
10	10	Banco de Oro	14,933,596,039	14,574,197,889	2.5%	13,675,803,166	9.2%
11	11	Allied Banking Corporation	13,916,653,404	13,919,626,653	0.0%	13,099,602,657	6.2%
12	12	Security Bank Corp.	10,194,291,912	10,225,152,592	-0.3%	9,700,742,892	5.1%
13	13	Prudential Bank	9,488,837,314	9,397,581,057	1.0%	8,676,636,695	9.4%
14	14	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]	6,444,079,509	6,470,100,670	-0.4%	6,705,882,054	-3.9%
15	16	Export and Industry Bank	4,459,742,374	4,445,051,304	0.3%	4,195,985,071	6.3%
16	17	Philippine Trust Co.	4,373,681,017	4,191,663,549	4.3%	4,002,533,616	9.3%
17	18	International Exchange Bank	4,232,595,708	4,175,179,610	1.4%	3,892,328,574	8.7%
18	19	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	3,900,765,484	3,858,218,651	1.1%	3,392,449,376	15.0%
19	21	Philippine Veterans Bank	3,679,061,784	3,618,421,356	1.7%	3,863,061,482	-4.8%
20	20	Bank of Commerce	3,671,724,540	3,671,008,764	0.0%	3,747,305,298	-2.0%
21	23	Asia United Bank	3,635,188,152	3,496,702,089	4.0%	3,202,346,150	13.5%
22	25	ABN-Amro Bank	2,984,386,683	2,847,885,995	4.8%	2,568,689,393	16.2%
23	24	East West Bank	2,864,862,396	2,885,776,295	-0.7%	2,832,080,752	1.2%
24	26	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.[a]	2,633,016,444	2,592,098,483	1.6%	2,662,622,218	-1.1%
25	27	Maybank Phils. Inc.	2,371,233,839	2,355,802,791	0.7%	2,573,478,954	-7.9%
26	28	United Overseas Bank	1,813,636,682	1,924,718,204	-5.8%	1,177,368,663	54.0%
27	22	United Coconut Planters Bank	1,780,670,733	3,557,233,959	-49.9%	2,855,276,522	-37.6%
28	30	HSBC	1,342,838,474	1,348,527,451	-0.4%	1,344,882,130	-0.2%
29	31	Standard Chartered Bank	1,256,834,500	1,256,834,500	0.0%	1,243,200,000	1.1%
30	29	ING Barings	1,217,734,768	1,358,788,646	-10.4%	1,621,612,304	-24.9%
31	32	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	720,433,671	720,433,671	0.0%	720,433,671	0.0%
32	33	Deutsche Bank AG[b]	625,219,597	625,219,597	0.0%	625,000,000	0.0%
33	34	Mizuho Corporate Bank	601,912,599	601,912,599	0.0%	601,912,599	0.0%
34	35	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	471,849,697	562,750,324	-16.2%	469,419,977	0.5%
35	36	Bank of America	422,500,000	422,500,000	0.0%	422,500,000	0.0%
36	37	International Commercial Bank of China	405,434,000	405,434,000	0.0%	405,434,000	0.0%
37	38	Bangkok Bank	265,831,677	265,831,677	0.0%	265,831,677	0.0%
38	39	Korea Exchange Bank[c]	257,000,000	257,000,000	0.0%	257,000,000	0.0%
39	40	JP Morgan Chase Bank	216,319,666	223,285,468	-3.1%	223,753,311	-3.3%
40	41	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	(333,615,558)	(321,583,629)	-3.7%	(274,378,720)	21.6%
	15	Citibank[e]		4,663,444,350	-	4,661,129,409	-
		GRAND TOTAL[f] Php	364,707,624,093	364,180,224,621	0.1%	349,942,034,479	4.2%

Total Deposit Accounts of Commercial Banks (3rd & 4th quarters 2003 & 4th quarter 2002)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	Q4 '03	Q3 '03	% Change	Q4 '02	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	338,340,316,682	335,301,608,388	0.9%	328,573,895,016	3.0%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	274,529,049,053	266,692,199,161	2.9%	264,685,110,065	3.7%
3	3	Land Bank of the Philippines	199,125,335,237	193,260,052,156	3.0%	176,516,372,903	12.8%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	181,024,813,395	182,791,768,114	-1.0%	167,035,449,759	8.4%
5	5	Philippine National Bank	151,331,058,294	146,459,242,531	3.3%	135,845,646,480	11.4%
6	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	110,027,108,622	104,589,950,334	5.2%	101,398,202,337	8.5%
7	8	Banco de Oro	100,001,795,270	96,171,367,249	4.0%	90,953,858,961	9.9%
8	9	Allied Banking Corporation	87,589,530,117	82,356,146,126	6.4%	79,903,868,474	9.6%
9	10	China Banking Corp.	71,865,042,137	73,844,399,683	-2.7%	81,112,167,014	-11.4%
10	11	United Coconut Planters Bank	65,478,314,859	56,645,530,695		83,030,443,984	-21.1%
11	12	HSBC	57,334,711,823	56,011,598,089	2.4%	49,372,977,085	16.1%
12	13	Security Bank Corp.	49,066,255,499	44,322,715,263	10.7%	39,153,895,446	25.3%
13	14	Union Bank of the Philippines	44,486,551,383	43,911,591,787	1.3%	41,696,427,434	6.7%
14	18	Bank of Commerce	36,699,693,642	34,576,180,808	6.1%	28,212,851,387	30.1%
15	17	Development Bank of the Philippines	36,220,001,569	35,649,866,962	1.6%	34,971,323,917	3.6%
16	16	Prudential Bank	36,165,932,248	36,492,899,604	-0.9%	35,228,688,232	2.7%
17	19	International Exchange Bank	35,487,690,260	33,552,603,322	5.8%	31,453,444,418	12.8%
18	20	Philippine Trust Co.	32,247,873,534	31,602,808,049	2.0%	28,525,405,788	13.0%
19	15	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]	26,584,982,923	37,211,707,897	-28.6%	33,924,564,754	-21.6%
20	21	Standard Chartered Bank	23,959,586,758	25,957,217,770	-7.7%	26,566,798,316	-9.8%
21	22	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	17,651,660,759	16,226,328,405	8.8%	14,015,171,533	25.9%
22	23	East West Bank	13,196,035,745	12,343,515,249	6.9%	10,924,477,091	20.8%
23	25	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	12,510,748,005	11,179,481,568	11.9%	10,747,454,973	16.4%
24	24	Deutsche Bank AG[b]	12,080,896,924	12,274,155,229	-1.6%	14,061,622,966	-14.1%
25	26	Export and Industry Bank	10,690,905,255	10,592,987,349	0.9%	5,701,555,568	87.5%
26	27	United Overseas Bank	10,403,503,324	10,270,167,728	1.3%	9,139,389,340	13.8%
27	28	Asia United Bank	9,213,674,096	9,334,047,647	-1.3%	7,370,287,142	25.0%
28	29	Philippine Veterans Bank	9,136,985,450	8,825,102,871	3.5%	8,771,637,465	4.2%
29	31	Maybank Phils. Inc.	6,157,494,537	6,113,426,798	0.7%	5,866,397,774	5.0%
30	33	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4,577,142,728	4,678,322,502	-2.2%	5,539,646,761	-17.4%
31	30	JP Morgan Chase Bank	4,066,878,095	6,625,839,970	-38.6%	8,661,073,702	-53.0%
32	35	Mizuho Corporate Bank	3,848,003,880	3,943,518,638	-2.4%	4,203,880,136	-8.5%
33	37	Korea Exchange Bank[c]	3,783,816,400	3,185,787,746	18.8%	2,475,507,181	52.9%
34	34	ABN-Amro Bank	3,062,483,091	4,034,320,457	-24.1%	3,474,103,868	-11.6%
35	36	Bank of America	2,958,299,017	3,924,677,147	-24.6%	4,208,611,048	-29.7%
36	32	ING Barings	2,262,576,456	6,045,217,944	-62.6%	2,806,143,621	-19.4%
37	38	International Commercial Bank of China	1,677,351,020	1,761,576,626	-4.8%	1,973,679,734	-15.0%
38	39	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.[a]	1,309,928,772	1,551,751,091	-15.6%	2,394,525,713	-45.3%
39	40	Bangkok Bank	602,930,594	659,732,603	-8.6%	577,192,729	4.5%
40	41	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	391,134,196	358,383,983	9.1%	337,273,567	16.0%
	6	Citibank[e]		129,695,762,696	-	144,151,627,567	-
		GRAND TOTAL[f] Php	1,748,807,776,971	1,716,028,187,771	1.9%	1,652,837,149,666	5.8%

Return on Equity (3rd & 4th quarters 2003 & 4th quarter 2002)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	Q4 '03	Q3 '03	Q4 '02
1	41	United Coconut Planters Bank	192.91%	-227.26%	-68.78%
2	33	ABN-Amro Bank	24.10%	0.41%	-66.43%
3	2	Union Bank of the Philippines	19.84%	25.11%	11.50%
4	4	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	19.51%	21.32%	20.68%
5	31	Deutsche Bank AG[b]	18.98%	1.31%	14.90%
6	3	China Banking Corp.	17.74%	21.39%	22.49%
7	8	Asia United Bank	14.01%	12.81%	16.43%
8	5	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	13.95%	17.77%	13.02%
9	10	International Commercial Bank of China	12.61%	11.50%	-33.10%
10	9	International Exchange Bank	11.79%	12.43%	14.16%
11	17	Standard Chartered Bank	11.62%	9.25%	6.15%
12	12	Bank of the Philippine Islands	11.21%	10.40%	10.56%
13	11	Development Bank of the Philippines	11.10%	11.11%	10.32%
14	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	10.89%	13.35%	11.68%
15	13	Land Bank of the Philippines	9.97%	10.37%	7.03%
16	15	Banco de Oro	9.91%	9.46%	8.36%
17	6	HSBC	9.34%	14.38%	19.97%
18	22	Philippine Trust Co.	8.96%	6.14%	7.25%
19	18	Allied Banking Corporation	7.61%	8.40%	7.73%
20	14	Korea Exchange Bank[c]	7.15%	9.70%	7.94%
21	16	Bank of Commerce	6.90%	9.38%	9.80%
22	19	Security Bank Corp.	6.37%	7.45%	5.76%
23	23	Philippine Veterans Bank	6.29%	5.74%	5.48%
24	21	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	5.87%	6.17%	5.55%
25	20	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	5.71%	6.85%	8.68%
26	24	Prudential Bank	4.95%	5.26%	4.49%
27	26	ING Barings	4.87%	3.95%	13.46%
28	28	Export and Industry Bank	3.70%	2.85%	12.96%
29	30	Mizuho Corporate Bank	3.58%	2.61%	1.48%
30	27	Equitable PCI Bank	3.55%	3.61%	1.85%
31	25	East West Bank	3.13%	5.12%	4.82%
32	32	Philippine National Bank	0.80%	0.90%	-11.00%
33	34	Bank of America	0.44%	0.00%	-32.37%
34	37	JP Morgan Chase Bank	-0.40%	-15.87%	30.28%
35	35	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.[a]	-1.86%	-1.84%	3.15%
36	36	Bangkok Bank	-6.00%	-9.00%	2.95%
37	38	Maybank Phils. Inc.	-16.10%	-19.41%	-10.32%
38	39	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	-21.27%	-26.03%	-18.16%
39	40	United Overseas Bank	-35.81%	-40.62%	-46.99%
	1	Citibank[e]		30.89%	25.66%
	29	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]		2.62%	7.54%

Real & Other Properties Owned or Acquired by Commercial Banks (3rd & 4th quarters 2003 & 4th quarter 2002)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	Q4 '03	Q3 '03	% Change	Q4 '02	% Change
1	1	Philippine National Bank	27,474,422,293	27,392,117,075	0.3%	26,885,367,702	2.2%
2	2	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	27,107,812,105	26,667,070,280	1.7%	25,169,738,366	7.7%
3	3	United Coconut Planters Bank[e]	22,145,953,927	22,226,638,065	-0.4%	19,971,616,206	10.9%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	16,575,171,638	15,869,944,992	4.4%	12,393,979,705	33.7%
5	5	Land Bank of the Philippines	14,506,196,647	14,436,545,957	1.1%	13,470,322,119	8.4%
6	6	Bank of the Philippines Islands	12,272,130,348	12,125,942,312	1.2%	9,861,400,267	24.4%
7	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	6,690,166,716	6,735,413,459	-0.7%	6,878,697,994	-2.7%
8	8	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]	6,423,353,438	6,410,340,955	0.2%	6,331,148,115	1.5%
9	9	Union Bank of the Philippines	5,943,169,673	6,060,352,908	-1.9%	5,753,943,689	3.3%
10	11	Export and Industry Bank	5,936,461,059	5,519,665,299	7.6%	3,995,076,574	48.6%
11	12	Allied Bank	5,408,078,087	5,485,651,844	-1.4%	5,420,622,084	-0.2%
12	10	Banco de Oro	5,362,598,071	5,628,860,596	-4.7%	5,429,738,253	-1.2%
13	13	Prudential Bank	5,073,707,070	4,793,709,018	5.8%	3,737,575,690	35.7%
14	14	China Banking Corp.	4,655,922,964	4,381,993,764	6.3%	4,448,448,529	4.7%
15	15	Development Bank of the Philippines	4,038,663,067	3,873,589,368	4.3%	3,584,224,732	12.7%
16	16	Security Bank	3,670,130,271	3,566,902,508	2.9%	3,622,759,050	1.3%
17	17	Bank of Commerce	3,371,475,716	3,435,206,679	-1.9%	2,144,803,871	57.2%
18	18	International Exchange Bank	3,035,357,504	2,950,612,036	2.9%	3,186,914,664	-4.8%
19	19	Philippine Trust Co.	2,707,575,325	2,535,895,587	6.8%	486,173,979	456.9%
20	20	Philippine Veterans Bank	2,114,686,290	1,783,486,851	18.6%	1,697,359,250	24.6%
21	21	Maybank Phils. Inc.	708,196,278	651,985,728	8.6%	380,169,309	86.3%
22	22	East West Bank	563,767,883	558,367,714	1.0%	560,582,922	0.6%
23	24	United Overseas Bank	350,484,048	291,536,183	20.2%	327,166,896	7.1%
24	26	Standard Chartered Bank	137,518,374	129,990,641	5.8%	100,973,101	36.2%
25	25	HSBC	125,279,409	168,632,528	-25.7%	143,139,541	-12.5%
26	27	JP Morgan Chase Bank	85,000,000	85,000,000	0.0%	85,000,000	0.0%
27	29	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	38,766,996	38,841,600	-0.2%	39,824,663	-2.7%
28	32	ABN-Amro Bank	25,850,668	14,523,849	78.0%	40,173,516	-35.7%
29	30	Banco Santandera	17,176,250	17,176,250	0.0%	17,176,250	0.0%
30	31	Asia United Bank	15,155,219	15,155,219	0.0%	10,155,219	49.2%
31	33	Bangkok Bank	5,097,600	5,097,600	0.0%	5,097,600	0.0%
32	28	International Commercial Bank of China	-	43,022,183	-%	49,052,183	-
	23	Citibank[e]		412,809,319	-	400,740,984	-
		GRAND TOTAL[f] Php	186,675,328,935	183,899,269,049	1.5%	166,228,422,039	12.3%

a Banco Santander—total loan portfolio amount derived from its reported Dosri amount & Dosri ratio
b Deutsche Bank AG—total loan portfolio amount derived from its reported Dosri amount and Dosri ratio
c Korea Exchange Bank—total loan portfolio amount derived from its reported Dosri amount and Dosri ratio
d Philippine Bank of Communications—No 4th quarter 2003 ROE reported
e Citibank—has yet to submit its statement of condition
f Grand totals exclude Citibank figures

Sources: Published statements of condition, BSP
Compiled by Nancar O. Tolosa, PDI Research

Non- Performing Loans of Commercial Banks (3rd & 4th quarters 2003)

Ranking Q4 '03	Ranking Q3 '03	Commercial Banks	NPL Amount Q4 '03	NPL Amount Q3 '03	Total Loans Q4 '03	Total Loans Q3 '03
1	1	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	90.00%	89.00%	7,139,856	7,139,856	7,933,173	8,022,310
2	2	United Overseas Bank	53.53%	55.01%	4,755,037,890	4,818,578,225	8,882,940,201	8,759,458,689
3	3	Philippine National Bank	49.00%	50.00%	48,512,625,600	48,061,487,831	99,005,358,367	96,122,975,662
4	5	Philippine Bank of Communications[d]	35.73%	28.26%	6,927,411,126	6,374,779,974	19,388,220,335	22,557,607,835
5	7	United Coconut Planters Bank	33.03%	25.35%	17,480,590,587	13,743,408,425	52,923,374,469	54,214,628,893
6	4	Prudential Bank	32.61%	38.26%	6,065,840,857	6,930,115,770	18,601,167,915	18,113,214,245
7	11	Bangkok Bank	24.89%	19.00%	540,794,988	539,383,971	2,172,740,009	2,838,863,008
8	6	Bank of Commerce	24.63%	27.68%	6,217,010,548	6,183,276,519	25,241,618,140	22,338,426,729
9	10	Export and Industry Bank	18.93%	19.78%	2,008,631,274	2,134,070,025	10,610,836,101	10,789,029,449
10	8	Maybank Phils. Inc.	18.64%	21.62%	1,392,988,985	1,637,140,621	7,473,009,575	7,572,343,299
11	9	Land Bank of the Philippines	17.83%	19.89%	24,468,755,223	25,447,699,315	137,233,624,358	127,942,178,557
12	14	Equitable PCI Bank	14.80%	14.99%	22,393,377,502	23,040,244,997	151,306,604,743	153,704,102,715
13	12	Allied Banking Corporation	14.69%	16.16%	8,256,370,000	8,294,860,000	56,204,016,338	51,329,579,208
14	13	China Banking Corp.	14.56%	15.42%	8,780,570,738	8,972,914,699	60,306,117,706	58,190,108,294
15	15	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	14.31%	14.75%	15,828,445,000	15,336,122,000	110,611,076,171	103,967,267,797
16	27	Philippine Trust Co.	14.06%	8.31%	2,005,367,908	1,148,305,079	14,262,929,644	13,818,352,336
17	19	Union Bank of the Philippines	13.87%	12.80%	4,673,079,324	3,796,834,622	33,691,992,242	29,662,770,484
18	17	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	13.69%	13.86%	34,956,797,736	32,929,175,339	255,345,491,132	237,584,237,655
19	18	International Exchange Bank	12.46%	13.41%	2,637,653,416	2,696,234,723	21,168,968,026	20,106,150,060
20	20	Development Bank of the Philippines	11.81%	12.46%	9,864,350,645	10,105,966,676	83,525,407,663	81,107,276,693
21	22	East West Bank	11.70%	11.35%	1,276,154,711	1,171,571,774	10,907,305,223	10,322,218,269
22	16	Philippine Veterans Bank	11.35%	14.73%	723,229,414	964,503,337	6,372,065,322	6,547,884,163
23	23	Security Bank Corp.	10.85%	11.26%	4,497,384,501	4,755,522,712	41,450,548,396	42,233,771,865
24	24	Asia United Bank	9.74%	9.46%	1,287,883,233	1,223,819,216	13,222,620,465	12,936,778,182
25	21	International Commercial Bank of China	7.67%	12.17%	730,394,185	1,265,920,831	9,522,740,352	10,401,978,891
26	26	Bank of the Philippine Islands	7.14%	8.63%	11,928,330,065	13,777,701,785	167,063,446,289	159,648,919,873
27	30	HSBC	6.51%	5.31%	2,027,987,048	1,613,192,624	31,151,874,777	30,380,275,405
28	28	Banco de Oro	6.34%	6.72%	4,691,672,847	4,717,088,964	74,001,149,006	70,194,776,250
29	33	JP Morgan Chase Bank	6.29%	3.80%	198,528,029	198,528,029	3,156,248,474	5,224,421,816
30	25	Standard Chartered Bank	5.99%	9.41%	1,331,984,972	2,419,041,158	22,236,810,885	25,707,132,391
31	31	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	4.54%	4.96%	514,215,658	515,416,708	11,326,336,090	10,391,465,890
32	32	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4.45%	4.26%	149,123,381	149,123,381	3,351,087,213	3,500,546,850
33	29	Mizuho Corporate Bank	4.05%	5.72%	429,247,615	433,742,922	10,598,706,535	7,582,916,214
34	34	ING Barings	2.36%	2.76%	294,059,461	293,976,241	12,460,146,633	10,651,313,064
35	36	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	1.48%	1.45%	210,591,909	210,591,909	14,229,183,041	14,523,579,931
36	37	ABN-AMRO Bank	0.57%	0.40%	28,015,197	28,153,907	4,914,946,842	7,038,476,750
37	40	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.[a]	-	-	-	-		2,824,399,306
38	39	Bank of America	0.00%	0.00%	844,829	844,829	1,685,286,481	1,800,000,000
39	41	Deutsche Bank AG[b]	0.00%	0.00%	-	-	10,508,327,841	10,035,110,091
40	38	Korea Exchange Bank[c]	0.00%	0.36%	1,610	7,501,602	1,848,589,259	2,060,879,720
	35	Citibank[e]		1.58%		2,155,180,005		136,403,797,803
		GRAND TOTAL[f]			258,092,467,867	255,945,980,595	1,617,970,845,432	1,564,753,442,838

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Go for risk-free investments, bankers say

From page B2-1

dollar versus the Philippine peso.

Foreign-currency denominated products are also available to investors who wish to have better returns on their assets. For a dollar-denominated investment, an investor may choose a time-deposit type of outlet at a competitive yield with tenors of 30 to 360 days.

Maxihedge is a product that provides an alternative investment vehicle."

Alex Macapagal
AVP for corporate affairs
Land Bank of the Philippines

"INVESTING in secured and risk-free instruments—such as time deposits, high-yield savings accounts and government securities—is preferable with the kind of environment we have right now.

For clients who have P100,000 and are looking for short-term investment outlets, they may avail themselves of Land Bank's high yield savings account.

This facility offers a return of 3 percent per year for 30-day placements and 3.25 percent per year for 45-day placements.

Investing in treasury bills is also advisable for clients, especially for high net worth individuals who can invest at least P500,000. For long-term investments, investors should go for secured instruments like treasury bond, which offer a rate of return of about 10.5 percent for a tenor of three years, and 11.2 percent for a tenor of five years."

Michael Garcia
VP and head of trust group
International Exchange Bank

"FOR clients who are looking for an investment outlet, I would recommend short-term fixed income instruments.

For those who have dollars, it is advisable that they hold on to their dollars, at least until after the elections, to secure their money from a possible loss of purchasing power.

In the case of I-Bank, we offer fixed savings deposits of different maturities and, most recently, a Common Trust Fund called iFund Silver. For those looking for a guaranteed return, my recommendation would be the three-month fixed savings deposit. It has a guaranteed yield of 5.5 percent, gross. iFund Silver does not offer a guaranteed yield, but its return is expected to fall within the range of 4 percent to 14 percent per year. For short-term dollar time deposits, we offer a yield of 2.5 percent, gross.

Clients may opt for short-term government securities, which they can purchase through I-Bank."

Rey Delfin
Executive VP
Citystate Savings Bank

"WHILE we wait for the uncertainty in the market to dissipate, investors are advised to go for safe instruments and for safe deposits because they are insured by the PDIC (Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.).

Citystate Savings Bank is a thrift bank, so we suggest that small deposits of P100,000 or less could be invested in our special savings deposit. This instrument has a tenor of 30 days to one year and its 6-percent yield is higher than ordinary savings deposit.

For smaller savers, Citystate offers the facility called the CityMax. This is a three-in-one instrument which concurrently provides the privileges of a current account, a savings account and an automatic teller machine. If one avails himself of this facility, he or she may withdraw money anytime through an ATM, and he or she could also issue checks and gain interest from the placed money.

Because we want to cater to more people, CityMax requires a maintaining balance of P1,500 and offers a yield of one to 2 percent per month."

Bank . . .

From page B2-1

second place as it would combine Equitable's P278.8 billion in assets with BDO's P145.17 billion.

As of the fourth quarter, banks' total assets dropped to P3.08 trillion, down 3.7 percent from P3.2 trillion in the third quarter and lower by 1.6 percent from P3.13 trillion a year ago. But banks' investments in bonds and other debt instruments went up by 5.6 percent to P662.8 billion as of end-2003 from P627.4 billion a year ago.

Already, BPI senior executive vice president Aurelio Montinola III said the bank was always on the lookout for potential acquisitions.

But BDO chair Teresita Sy-Coson doused water on talk of a merger with Equitable, saying the bank would have to digest first its recent acquisitions—that of First e-Bank in October 2002 and of Banco Santander (which it had kept as a separate unit) in July 2003.

Obvious resistance to a merger is coming from the Go family of Equitable PCI. Its chair, Antonio Go, said the family would preserve its 24-percent stake and would not be a party to any merger.

Former BSP Governor Gabriel Singson said the consolidation of the banking sector would be good for the country.

"We will see more mergers. Look at the experience of Japan. In the past, more banks were family-owned but they eventually realized that it would be better to consolidate because size is important," Singson said.

Aside from external factors like the May elections, banks must stay in shape to ward off impact of huge NPLs and ropoas on their books.

Rising bad loans

As of the fourth quarter of 2003, banks' bad loans stood at P258.09 billion from P258.1 billion the previous quarter while ropoa went up by 1.3 percent at P186.68 billion in the fourth quarter from P184.3 billion in the third quarter and by 12 percent from P166.63 billion a year ago.

Banks must have sufficient capital to keep up with the required provisioning for these bad loans and foreclosed assets. And a deteriorating level of capital alongside an increasing NPL and ropoa for some banks have alerted the BSP.

Some banks, according to the BSP, were "more vulnerable than what the industry average suggests due to high NPL/NPA ratios and low provisioning levels."

Nine banks have been identified as vulnerable. The list included five mid-sized banks and four relatively big lenders.

And just like how some banks could stubbornly oppose mergers due to the refusal of their shareholders to be diluted, most lenders could not accept the prospect of getting a "haircut"—a term that the BSP chief often uses to describe the painful process of accepting losses in their NPLs and ropoa.

A haircut is painful from a bank's perspective because asset managers wanted to buy the bad loans and seized assets at 20 to 30 percent of face value. A bank, in effect, has to write off 70 to 80 percent.

Crushing under the weight of bad loans, banks have to continuously provide additional capital for the potential losses.

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3. There will be one (1) Grand Draw where you can win back 10x all that you have charged on your Diners Club Card within the promo period up to a maximum of ₱1,000,000. (If your total qualified transactions from October 20, 2003 to February. 20, 2004 is ₱99,000, you win back ₱990,000!)
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BANKING Quarterly

Profit growth seen coming from aggressive lending

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER going through a period of consolidation prompted by the Asian currency turmoil five years ago, Philippine banks found the year 2003 a good one.

Because the lending activities have yet to pick up again, banks have in the past year relied mainly on alternative sources of revenue, particularly treasury bills and bonds, and foreign exchange trading.

"The banks' earnings last year were within expectations. Most posted double-digit growth," said Jomar Lacson, a TeamResearch analyst.

Among listed banks, Lacson said Bank of the Philippine Island And Union Bank of the Philippines stood out in the past years.

"That is still the case but you will now see other banks like Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Equitable PCI Bank catching up in terms of ROE (return on equity)."

Then there was the turnaround by Philippine National Bank, once the country's biggest bank, three years ahead of expectation under its rehabilitation program. Although the bank slid to 6th place in terms of assets, PNB last year posted a profit for the first time in five years.

The bullish outlook on bank earnings was reflected in the hefty price gains posted by publicly listed banks. Security Bank saw a 60.5-percent rise in stock price last year, the sharpest gain in the banking industry.

Consistent favorites UnionBank and BPI likewise did well with price gains of 51 percent and 39 percent, respectively.

The stock prices of China Banking Corp. and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. both registered about 28 percent jump while shares of Equitable PCI were up by 26 percent. PNB was up by 2.1 percent.

Key ratios

As of the fourth quarter of 2003, the top 10 best performing local Banks in terms of ROE were: Union Bank (19.84 percent); China Banking Corp. (17.74 percent); Chinatrust (Phils) Commercial Bank Corp. (13.95 percent); International Exchange Bank (11.79 percent), Bank of the Philippine Islands (11.21 percent), Development Bank of the Philippines (11.10 percent); Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (10.89 percent); Land Bank of the Philippines (9.97 percent); Banco de Oro Universal Bank (9.91 percent and Philippine Trust Co. (8.96 percent).

The ROEs of Metrobank and Equitable PCI Bank stood at 5.87 percent and 3.55 percent, respectively, while that of PNB was at 0.80 percent. Security Bank's ROE stood at 6.37 percent.

In terms of earnings growth, the best performers last year were Banco de Oro and Union Bank, registering profit growth of 43 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

The country's biggest bank in terms of resources, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., also reported a full-year net profit of P3.02 billion or about 20 percent better than the P2.51 billion registered a year ago.

Its subsidiary Philippine Savings Bank reported a 33.6-percent growth in net profit to P403.6 million from a year ago.

Capital adequacy

Second biggest lender Bank of the Philippine Islands reported a 10-percent expansion in earnings to P5.7 billion, the industry's highest in nominal terms.

Medium-sized lenders Security Bank and Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp. likewise posted profit growth of 24 percent and 22 percent, respectively.

Third biggest lender Equitable PCI Bank also estimated that its earnings last year increased by at least 20 percent or better than earlier expectations of a 10 percent growth.

Based on estimates of capital adequacy ratio—computed as equity divided by risk assets—the top five were Union Bank (32.21 percent); China Bank (30.41 percent), Security Bank (20.26 percent); BPI (19.86 percent) and Equitable PCI (18.37 percent). The industry average is roughly 5.41 percent.

Banks also set aside huge portion of their funds to provide for possible loan losses. The banking system's loan loss reserve ratio (including some foreign banks) was at 54.43 percent as of end-2003.

China Bank is the local bank with the highest LLR of 74.99 percent, followed by LandBank (69.11 percent); Equitable PCI (68.45 percent), DBP (66.62 percent) and Metrobank (63.65 percent).

Income growth

The good news is that the Philippine banking sector has bottomed out. What is uncertain, however, is how fast they will regain their appetite to lend.

"Most of the (loan) restructuring has been completed. They have cleaned their books so banks can now focus on income growth," Lacson said.

With local interest rates on the rise, Bankers Association of the Philippine president Cesar Virata said banks could now extract more revenue from lending activities this year hoping that economic activities would improve and demand for loans would increase.

Of course, the volatility of the peso still provides room for treasury gains, but the bulk of the banks' revenues must be sourced from lending growth this year, Virata said.

Lending growth, however, is hinged on how fast the banks can free up funds from non-performing assets.

Big disappointment

Lacson said the biggest disappointment in the banking sector for 2003 was the lackluster impact of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act.

"Everybody was thinking that the law should have sparked big improvement in the banks' asset quality," he said.

Lacson said if Metrobank was able to do it - selling over P16 billion worth of idle assets without any incentive - he saw no reason why other banks could not.

"It's not impossible to sell bad assets. It's really a question of buyers agreeing to buying it," he added.

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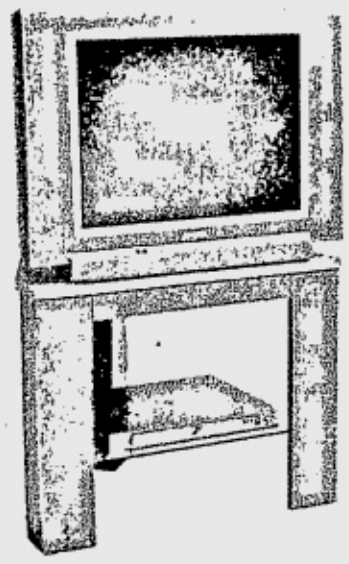

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Guest photographer Jun de Leon

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Dear Love

You are utterly unknowable.

When you are around we are powerless to do anything by reason. But you also illuminate what we do and clarify our reason. You redeem our sins as you lead us into their occasions.

In your name we justify acts that bring sorrow, then we carry your banner aloft when we have a change of heart. For your sake we ignore our other feelings, at times our best interests, even when our inner voices scream for you to be placed on a shelf.

Because of you, we embrace the victim's fate. Look at some of us, widowed from your touch and refusing to give happiness another chance, so that we will never stumble on another chance. How many have believed in you only to have their heads severed or bodies mangled in a crash?

Most of us say there is a thin line between you and hate. Isn't it more likely that you are the twin of hate? Sometimes, we hurt the most those we call our most beloved.

But then you make it possible for us to conquer our deepest fears and elevate ourselves to a state of grace. It is you that brings us to embrace woman, man, child or sworn enemy. And fight for honor and country. It is on your behalf that we forgive evil and endure pain with a smile. And so, the humblest flower is scented with so much joy. Pride and blinding shame we forget. We hold hands and kiss, and a few among us have even lived happily ever after in your name.

Most of us are tired searching for you. But every waking hour is more agreeable with the thought that you may be in our midst. Or that you are, in the end, part of ourselves. Just waiting to be unleashed.

Love, we do not know you.

You can be terrible and terrifying. But life is impossible without you. So stay. Please. Never leave us.

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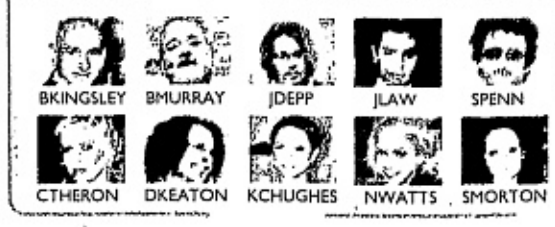

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Dear Lover

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You are utterly unknowable.

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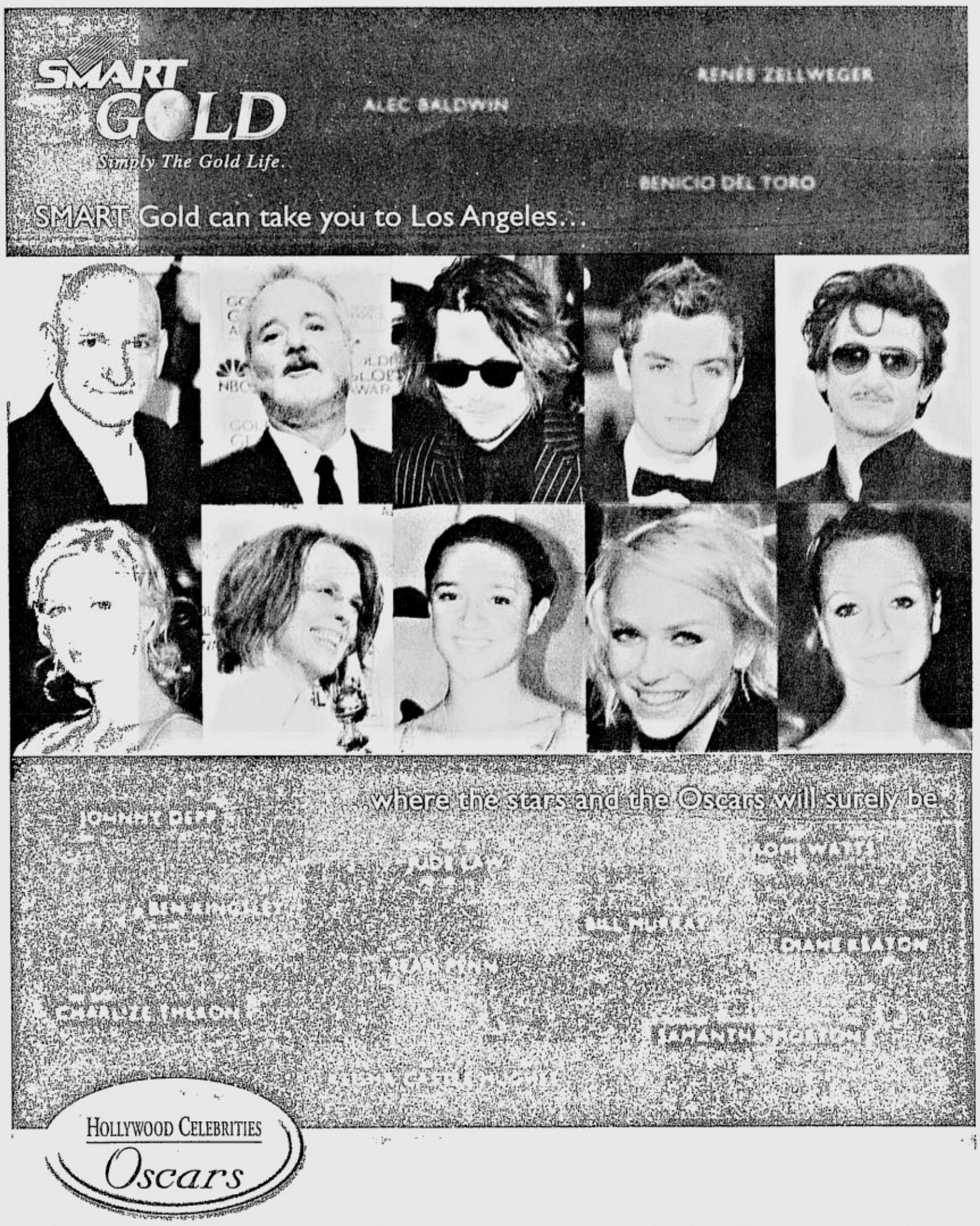

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BALLET. Ballet Manila brings to Ballet at the Park on Feb. 14, 5 p.m., excerpts from "Don Quixote." It features Lisa Macuja-Elizalde and Osias Barroso. Performances will be held at Star Theater, Manila. Admission is free.

MUSICAL. Concert at the Park presents the Sta. Cecilia Band under the baton of conductors Frenvee Andra and Jose Jasper Andre on Feb. 15, 6 p.m. Guest vocalists are soprano Thea Perez and tenor Ronan Ferrer. Hosting the show is Minette Padilla. Admission is free.

SEMINAR. Corban Daycare and Tutorial Center will hold the seminar "Child Savvy" for new parents, preschool educators and nannies. The event is on Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Call 8426665, 8093050.

SEMINAR. A scriptwriting seminar is slated on Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at 19 Hidalgo St., San Lorenzo Village. The seminar will be conducted by Nenette Pacoli, regional director of Good News (Philippines) Inc. Call 8426665, 8093050.

SEMINAR. The Missionaries of Mary will hold a Marian Encounter Seminar: Module 1 on Feb. 22 at the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center, located at Scout Santiago cor. Scout Mallos St., QC. Call 7438729.

WORKSHOP. Tapping the Creative Universe is a creativity workshop that will uncover and unblock the joy and creativity that yearns to express itself in all aspects of life. The event will be held March 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 7-9 p.m., at Rockwell Club, Amorsolo Drive, Rockwell, Makati. The workshop will run for six sessions and only two absences are allowed. Call 4265375, 9290230.

PROMO. Equitable Card Network and MasterCard International have teamed up to make traveling truly pleasurable and hassle-free by providing more perks and benefits at the same time reducing certain limitations. On your first use of your Equitable Travel Card, enjoy a bonus of 1,000 travel E-points until Aug. 7.

SEMINAR. Dr. Tody Dayrit and Edna Mijares, president and vice president, respectively, of the Integrated Chemists of the Philippines, will discuss Ensuring Competitiveness Through Good Laboratory Practices on Feb. 19, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Garden Oases Resort and Restaurant, Davao City. Call 2353532, 2329085, 0917-7859060.

ANNIVERSARY. General Santos City will celebrate its 65th foundation anniversary on the last week of February. All business establishments will have a Kalilangan grand mega sale festival during the whole month of February. On Feb. 14-March 5, the Kalilangan Foundation will hold a Fiesta Carnival and Kandagang sa Padiyan at the city's Oval Plaza.

EXPO. The Wastex and Cleantex 2004 will be held March 11-13 at the Philippine Training Center. Call 6511749, 4510946, 0920-2119559.

WORKSHOP. The Lopez Memorial Museum will hold an advanced Chinese painting workshop for four Saturdays, each session lasting three hours.. The workshop will be held on Feb. 21, 28, March 13 and 20 at the museum's Rizaliana Room, G/F, Benpress Bldg., Exchange Rd., Pasig, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Call 6312417, 4492355.

CONGRESS. The 3rd Philippine congress and exhibition on natural health will be held on March 20-21 at Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas, Mandaluyong. Call 3717015 to 16.

TRAINING. The National Museum will conduct the Basic Museology Training on May 18- June 4 at the conference room of the museum's central office. Call 5270278.

SEMINAR. The Philippine Society of Librarians and Information Specialists will hold the three-day seminar-workshop "Developing/Enhancing the Cataloguing and Indexing Skills of Librarians, Non-Librarians and other Library Personnel/Information Specialists" on March 17-19 at the 12/L, Social Hall Security and Exchange Commission Bldg., Edsa, Mandaluyong City. Call 9321295, 5279672, 7241994, 8978808 loc. 329 or 330.

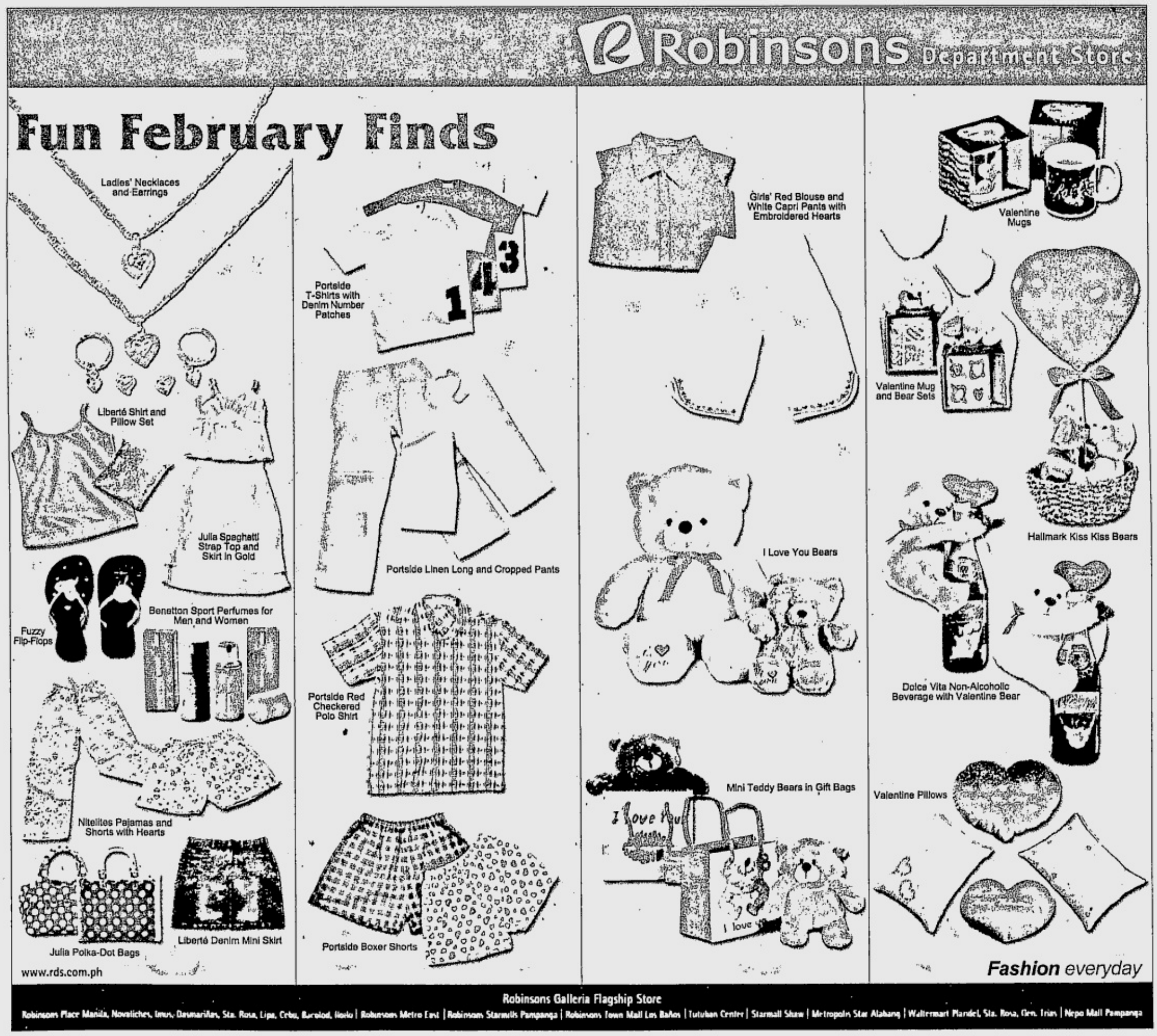
REUNION. Graduates of Cavite High School class 1955 are invited to register for the 50th grand reunion in January next year. Call 046-431051, 046-4310628 and 632-8137420.

SEMINAR. Corban Daycare and Tutorial Center will hold Easy English classes every Tuesday and Thursday, 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m., at 6/L, MB Aguirre Bldg., President's Ave. cor. Elizalde St. Call 8093050, 8426665.

THE MIRIAM College High School Glee Club and the Cultural/Classical Dance Club will hold their first joint concert "Sa Entablado" on Feb. 21, 6 p.m., at the UP Abelardo Hall Auditorium. Tickets are available at the gate.

OFFICIAL VISIT Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (left) and the Malaysian delegation were welcomed by chair of Kuok Philippine Properties Tomas Zita (right) at Makati Shangri-La. The official visit brought about the signing of an P825-million joint venture offshore oil exploration project in Mindoro by Malaysian oil firm Petronas and the Philippine National Oil Co.

BOOK DONATIONS TO CHILDREN'S LIBRARY Robinsons Supermarket recently handed over book donations from its Share-a-Gift drive to The Children's Library, at a turnover ceremony held at the fountain area of Robinsons Galleria. From left: Theresita Osorio, head librarian, Pasig City Library Learning Resource Center; Dolores Pita, director, Makabata School Foundation, Inc.; Maria Pamela Celino, project development officer, Children's Library; Paeng Batuigas, marketing services officer, Robinsons Supermarket Corp.,; Abel Tejam, marketing services manager, Robinsons Supermarket Corp.; and Rosario Rangasajo, officer-in-charge, San Juan Municipal Library



ROMANCING THE CAMERA
Front row: That's ace lensman Jun de Leon (second from left) with Tim Yap and Ricci Chan to his left. Standing behind him are Isabel Roces (third from left), Meki Saldaña, 2tay Maristela, Christine del Valle, Marlon Rivera, Manuel Barretto and Alex Carbonell. Others in photo are Propaganda beauty assistants.

the love team

IF love is lovelier the second time around, so is the second time that Jun de Leon graces our pages as guest photographer.

I think it was hangover from the many raves Lifestyle got from De Leon's major photographic opus "Seven Deadly Sins" that made me call him for an encore. This time, my proposal was for a gallery of photos interpreting love.

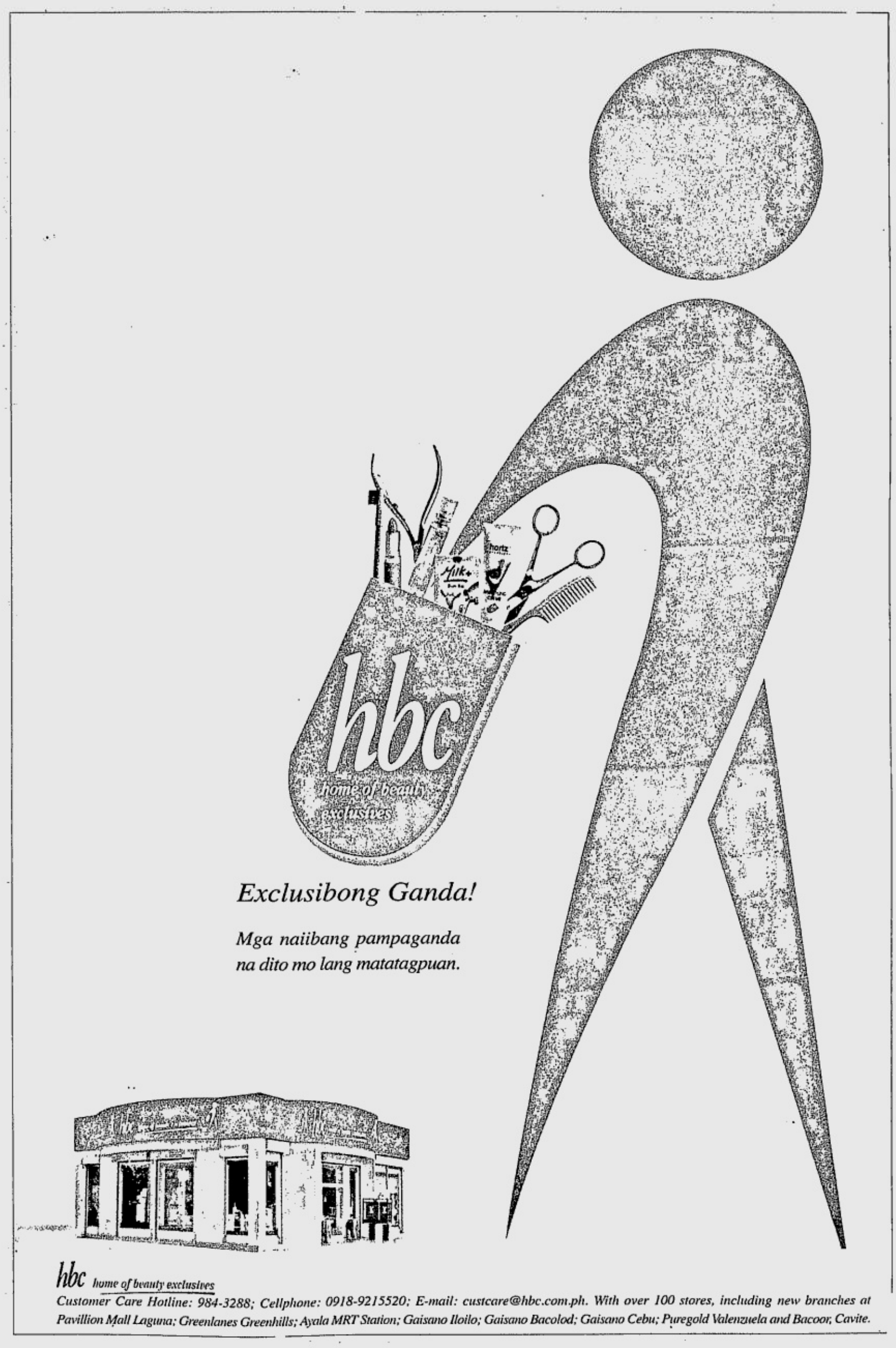
I was curious about what a photographer whose reputation for romantic liaisons precedes him would think of the idea. Would he think it too mushy? Too teenybopperish perhaps? To my surprise, he accepted my decent proposal and came back to me with even more surprising takes on love.

Besides his keen eye, what I adore most about De Leon as a photographer is his gift for putting together a team of major talents in a heartbeat. Models, fashion designers, stylists, hair and makeup pros—he rings them and they say yes, yes, oh yes. It's so exciting, the way this guy works, so impassioned. Yet so seamless. All an editor sees is the finished work.

I tell you, it's pure ecstasy to have photographs as wondrous as his, without having to deal with the many characters needed to complete each layout. Having said that, we nevertheless owe a debt of gratitude and bouquets of roses to Lucy Torres-Gomez, Isabel Roces, Kat Tantoco, 2tay Maristela, and Cal Carries' Tim Yap, Meki Saldaña, Teresa Herrera and Vince Canizares and Ida Campo for modeling; Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren, Eric Pineda, Julius Tarog, Maxi Cinco and Jon Fernando for the clothes; Marlon Rivera and his assistant Manuel Barretto for the styling; Propaganda for the hair and makeup, in particular Jing Monis, Alex Carbonell, Ricci Chan, Christine del Valle and Rivera again; Whiplash, Joey Espino and Sao Salinda.

So from us to you, in celebration of the rhymes and reasons of love, on these pages are more proofs of Jun de Leon's passion for photography.

CBF



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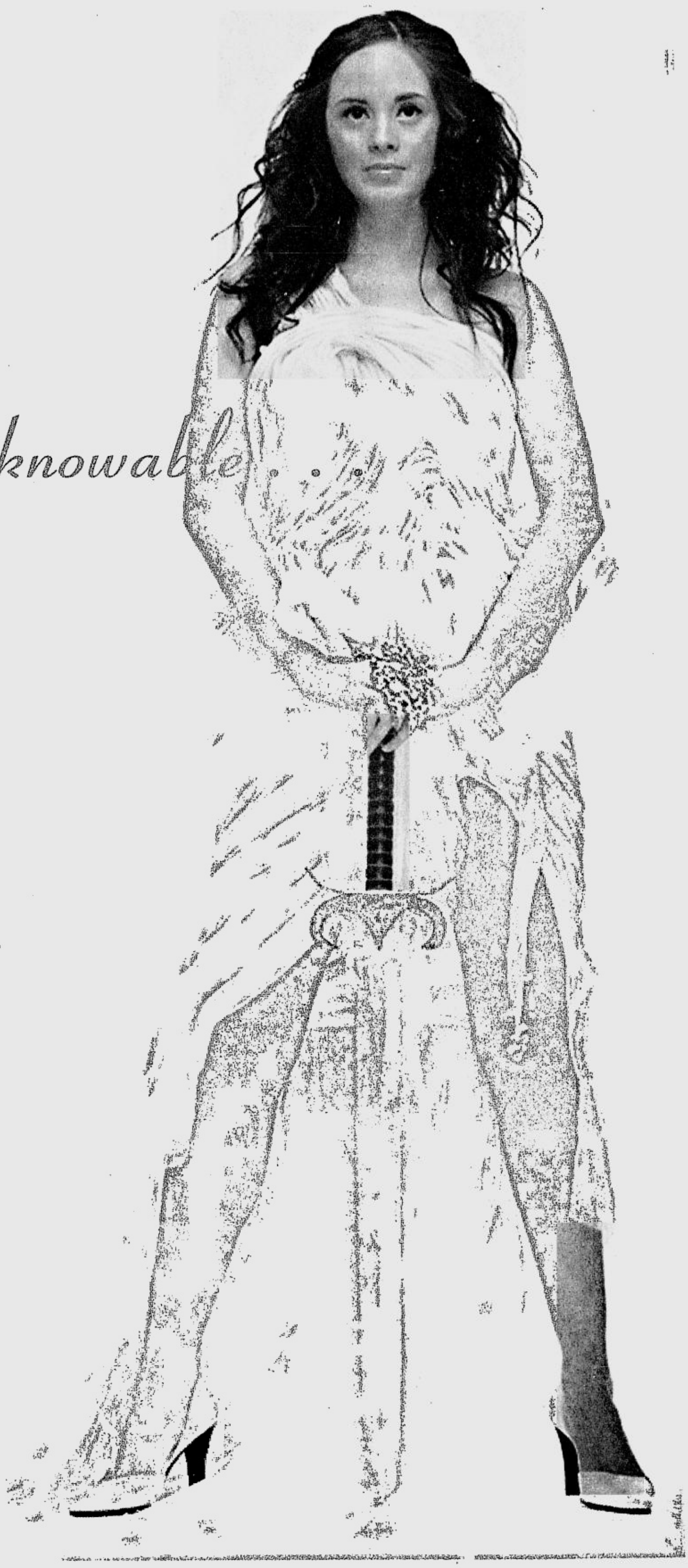
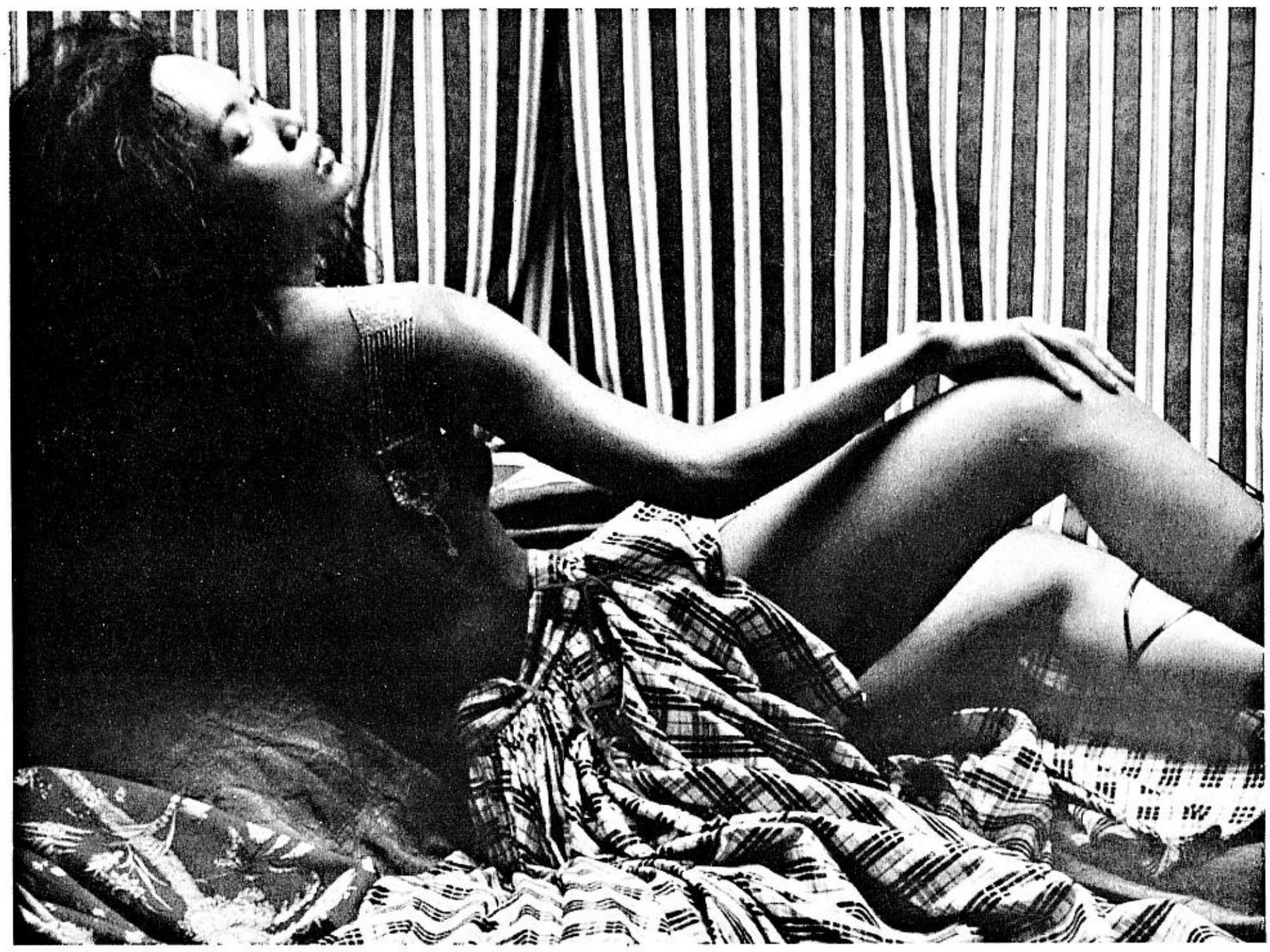
utterly unknowable



Fairy Tale

Model: Lucy Torres-Gomez
Hair: Alex Carbonell and Malou Manuel
Makeup: Alex Carbonell
Fashion: Cream gown by Jon Fernando



Self Love

Model: **Ida Ocampo of Cal Carrie's**
Hair: **Alex Carbonell and Malou Manuel**
Makeup: **Marlon Rivera**
Fashion: **Plaid skirt by Frederick Peralta**

acts that bring sorrow...

Longing

Model: **Meki Saldaña of Cal Carrie's**
Hair: **Alex Carbonell and Malou Manuel**
Makeup: **Alex Carbonell**
Fashion: **Denim dress and white coat by Jojie Lloren**

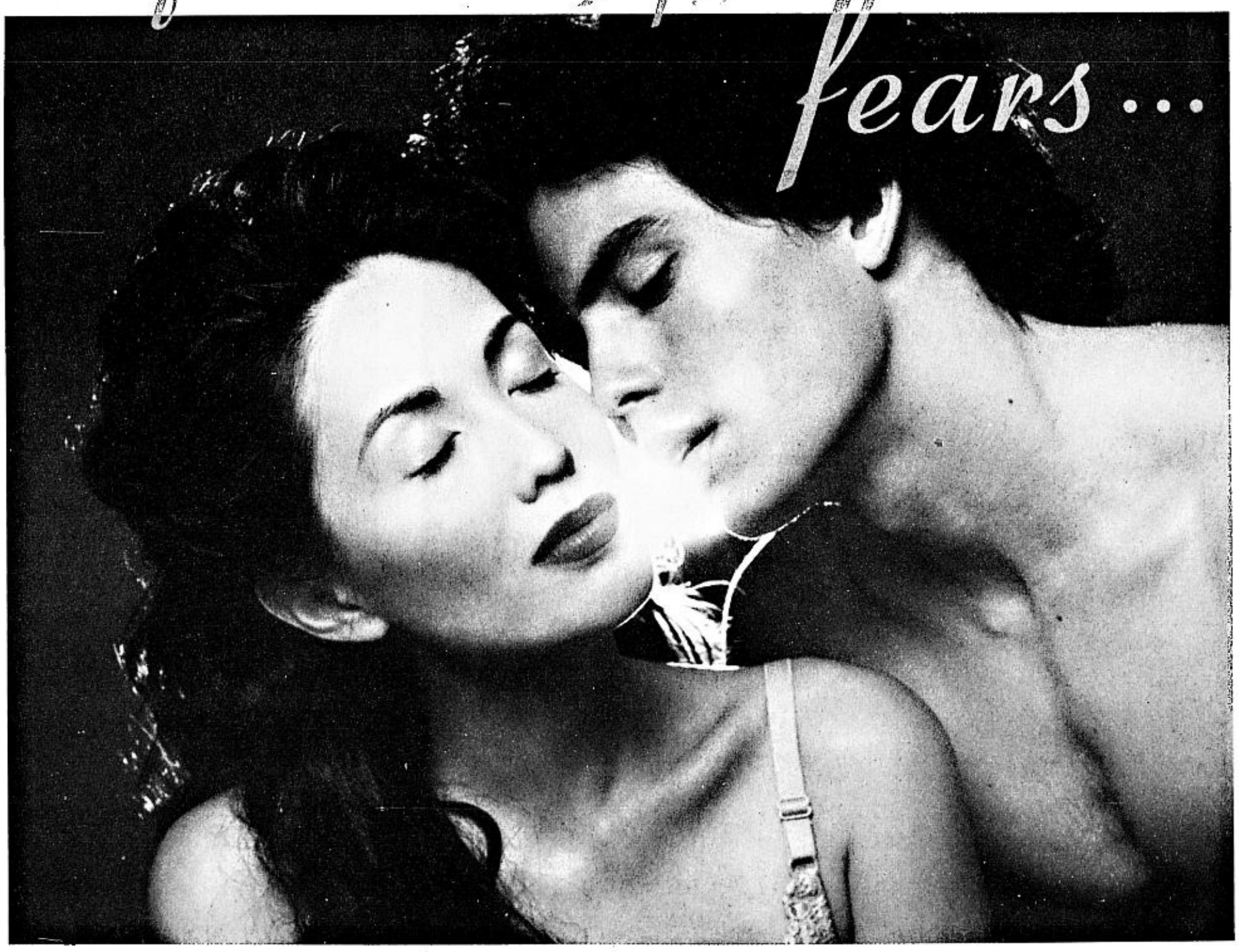
Madonna and Child

Model: **2tay Maristela**
Hair: **Alex Carbonell and Lourdes Francisco**
Makeup: **Jing del Valle**
Fashion: **Molded bustier and petticoats by Frederick Peralta**

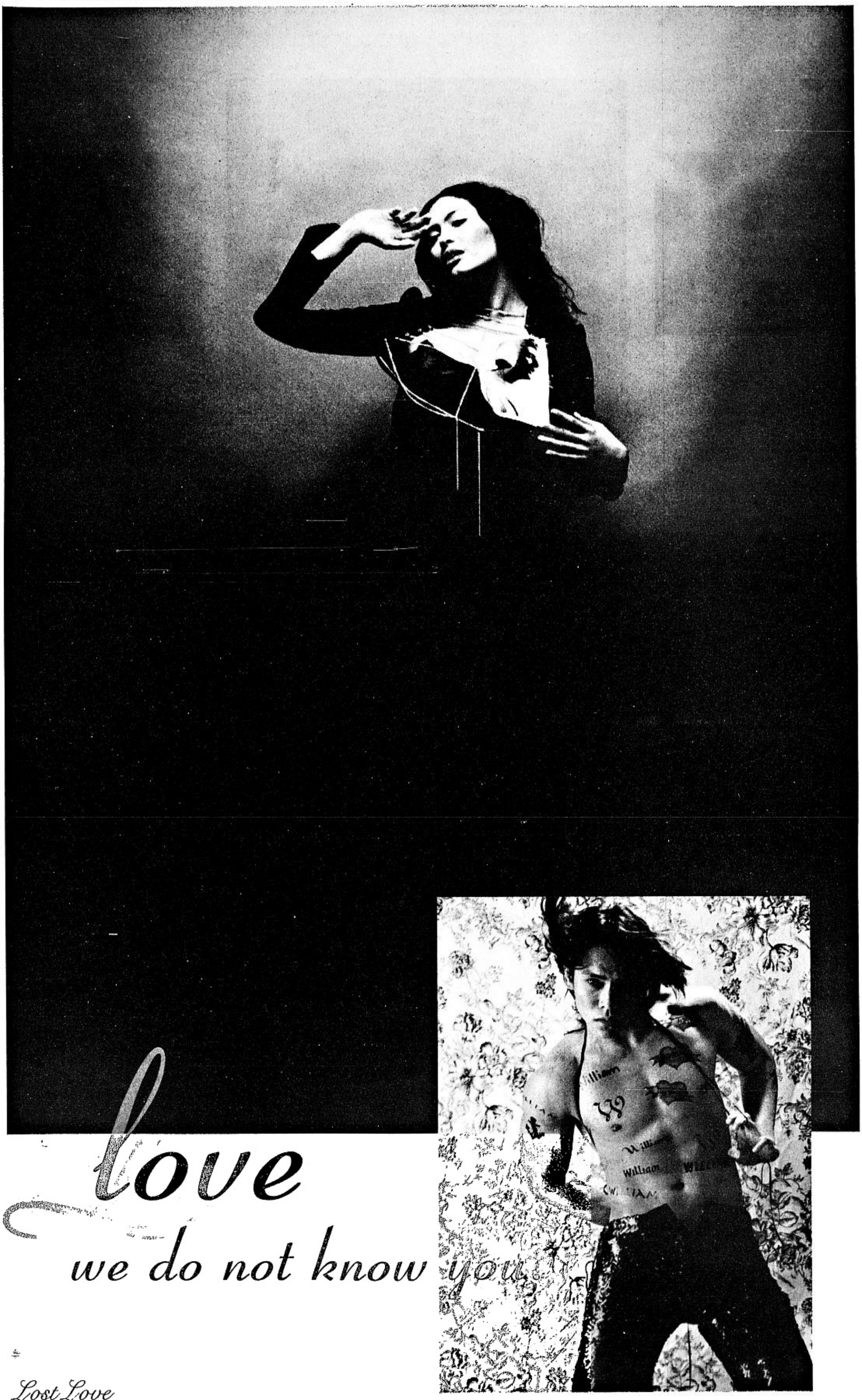
Puppy Love
Model: **Katrina Tantoco**
Hair: **Malou Manuel and Alex Carbonell**
Makeup: **Ricci Chan**
Fashion: **Denim bra top and skirt by Eric Pineda**

Model: **Tim Yap of Cal Carrie's**
Hair: **Alex Carbonell**
Makeup: **Ting del Valle**
Fashion: **Denim vest by Eric Pineda, black sleeveless shirt from Divisoria, denim pants model's own**

conquer our deepest fears...



The Kiss
Models: **Vince Canizares and Teresa Herrera of Cal Carrie's**
Hair and makeup: **Jing Monis**



love we do not know

Lost Love
Model: Isabel Roces
Hair: Alex Carbonell, Malou Manuel and Lourdes Francisco
Makeup: Ricci Chan
Fashion: Black satin gown by Julius Tarog

Obsession
Model: Richmond Azarraga
Hair and makeup: Alex Carbonell
Body tattoo/sticker: Marlon Rivera
Fashion: Black sequined pants by Frederick Peralta

Brittany Corporation's Portofino, the decidedly upscale, Italian-themed, residential and commercial enclave just a few minutes away from the Alabang Town Center, is now building on the success of its first four phases called Portofino Heights, with the next phase of the development offering courtyard residences.

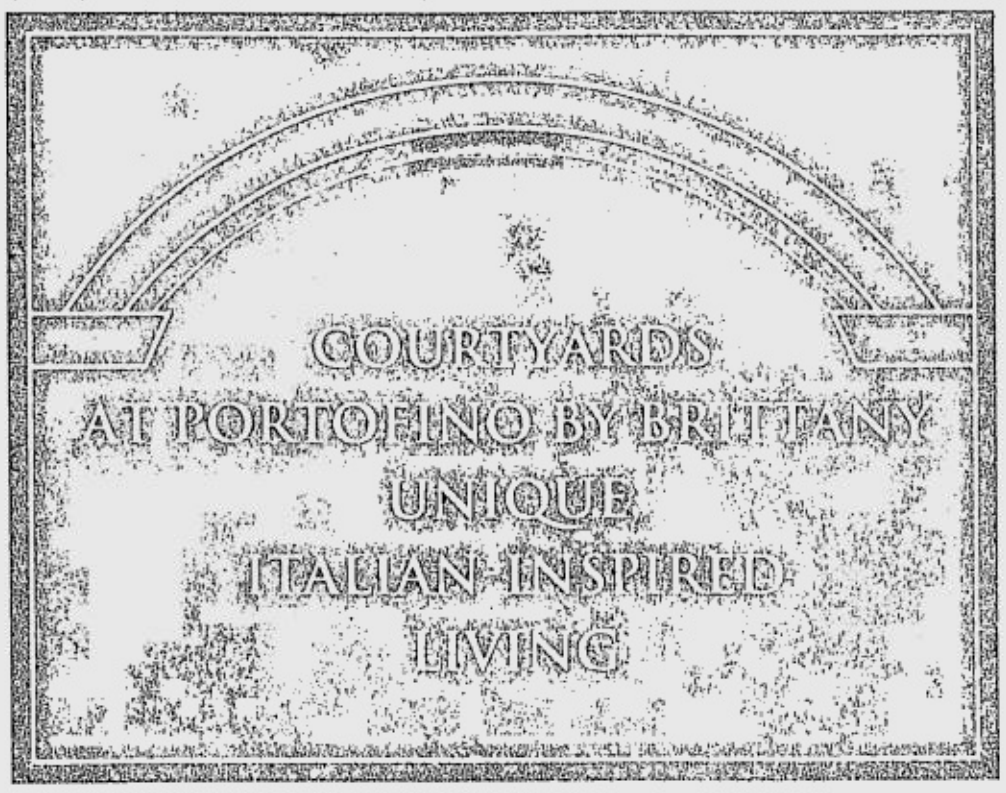
With all lots in Portofino Heights sold out in less than a year, the courtyard units will enable limited numbers of other future residents to partake of a unique way of life that only a thoroughly planned, high-end community from Brittany can offer. The various phases of Portofino, located along the recently opened Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-

Portofino by Brittany offers a limited number of Courtyard homes, laid out in a unique design in which each home features a courtyard within a courtyard, a first among residential communities in the country.

Laguna-Cavite Link Road, is envisioned for families whose members are citizens of the world, their homes eloquent testimony to an elegant yet comfortable lifestyle.

Portofino (Italian for "fine gateway") is one of four ongoing developments by Brittany Corporation, the pioneer in envisioning and building high-end, master-planned communities, each inspired by a distinctive theme. Living in Portofino will be evocative of the happy life in sunny Italy, where it is celebrated with exuberance every day. The original Portofino, a lovely seaport town in southern Italy with rolling, hilly terrain, a river and much greenery, is Brittany's inspiration for the multi-phase development project.

Portofino's courtyard homes are a one-of-a-kind application of the courtyard-within-a-courtyard



concept, an ingenious design exclusive to Brittany. The concept involves all models each having its own courtyard, while being part of a cluster of homes configured within a bigger courtyard.

Each courtyard home, in the typical Italian fashion of such residences, revolves around a courtyard in the center, with terra cotta and stucco as well as pronounced arches and layers that bring on warm, cheerful feelings. The main foyer allows access to the rooms on the ground level through the courtyard. The windows gracing the balconies permit light from outdoors to enter, while the open space in the center of each villa affords natural cooling against tropical temperatures. Arcades supported by columns, fountains and gardens will accent the soothing view of each courtyard from the halls within. The courtyard space of each home will be perfect for entertaining company or as a private area where family members may simply relax together. Some of the courtyard residences will feature charming *casitas*, rooms on the ground level ideal for staying guests.

Reminiscent of an Italian setting, the Portofino courtyard residences will boast streets of cobblestone and adornments consisting of statues, fountains and benches.

In keeping with Brittany's faithfully observed architectural and other development guidelines to maintain the integrity of each community's theme, the courtyard units at Portofino, clustered in cozy communities, are available in four models. Named after European masters, the models are the Cezanne (floor area 193 sq. m.), the Monet (floor area 233 sq. m.), the Raphael (floor area 247 sq. m.), and the Rembrandt (floor area 260 sq. m.). Selling prices range from Php 7.8 million to Php15 million for home and lot packages.

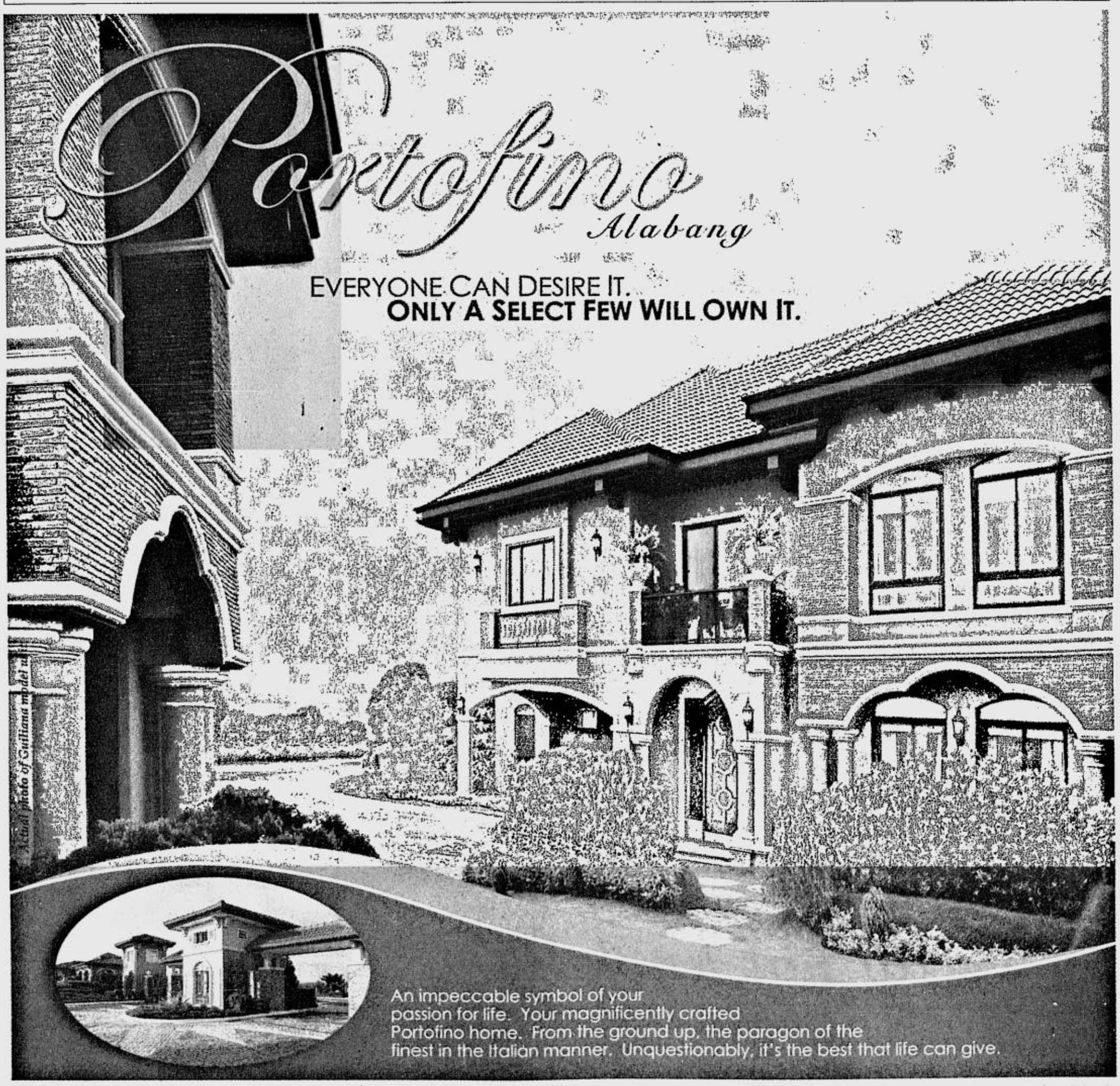
While adhering to architectural guidelines, Brittany is careful about striking a balance, not impinging on the personal preferences and tastes

Each Courtyard home at Brittany's Portofino is highlighted by an inner courtyard, maximizing use of space as well as natural light and ventilation. The design is inspired by Italian homes that are structured around a courtyard, "bring the outdoors, indoors" with arcades, benches and fountains.

of residents. Like other Brittany offerings, the courtyard residences of Portofino are meant for families with discerning taste.

Each residence will be a jewel, magnificently designed and built, giving the best that life can offer to its happy owner, the lord of his very own manor and proud possessor of a fine home, indeed!

ADVT'L.



Courtyards of Portofino Now Open.

Reach that height of beauty. Take the Filinvest Exit off South Expressway and go through Commerce Avenue, turn left and follow the Daang Hari Road to the premier community where Italian living begins--Portofino.

Call 850 6986 / 850 3084 for a property preview.
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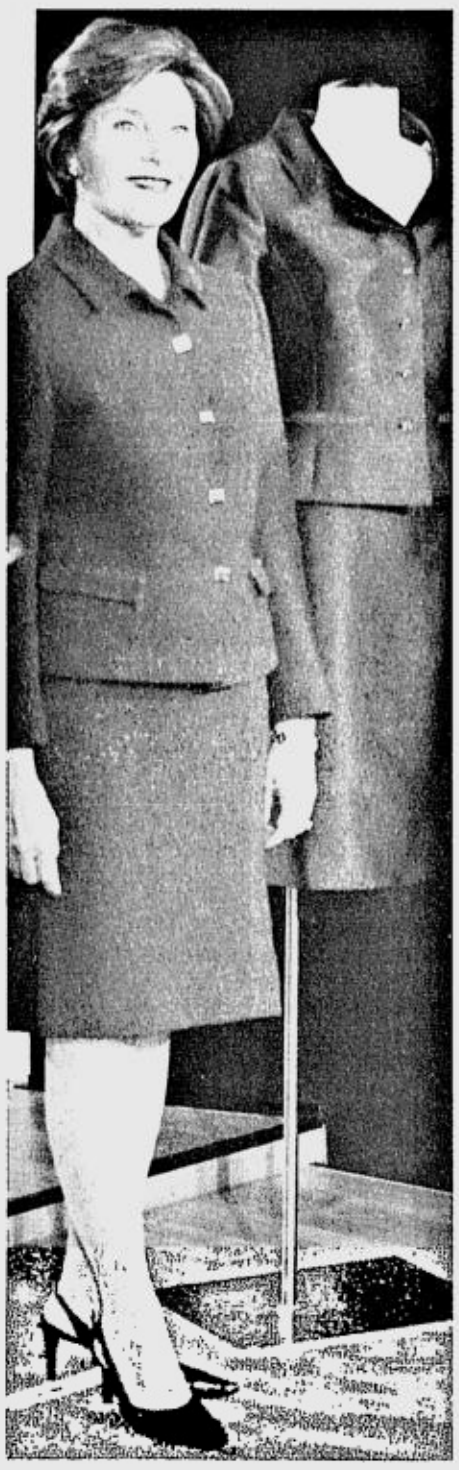
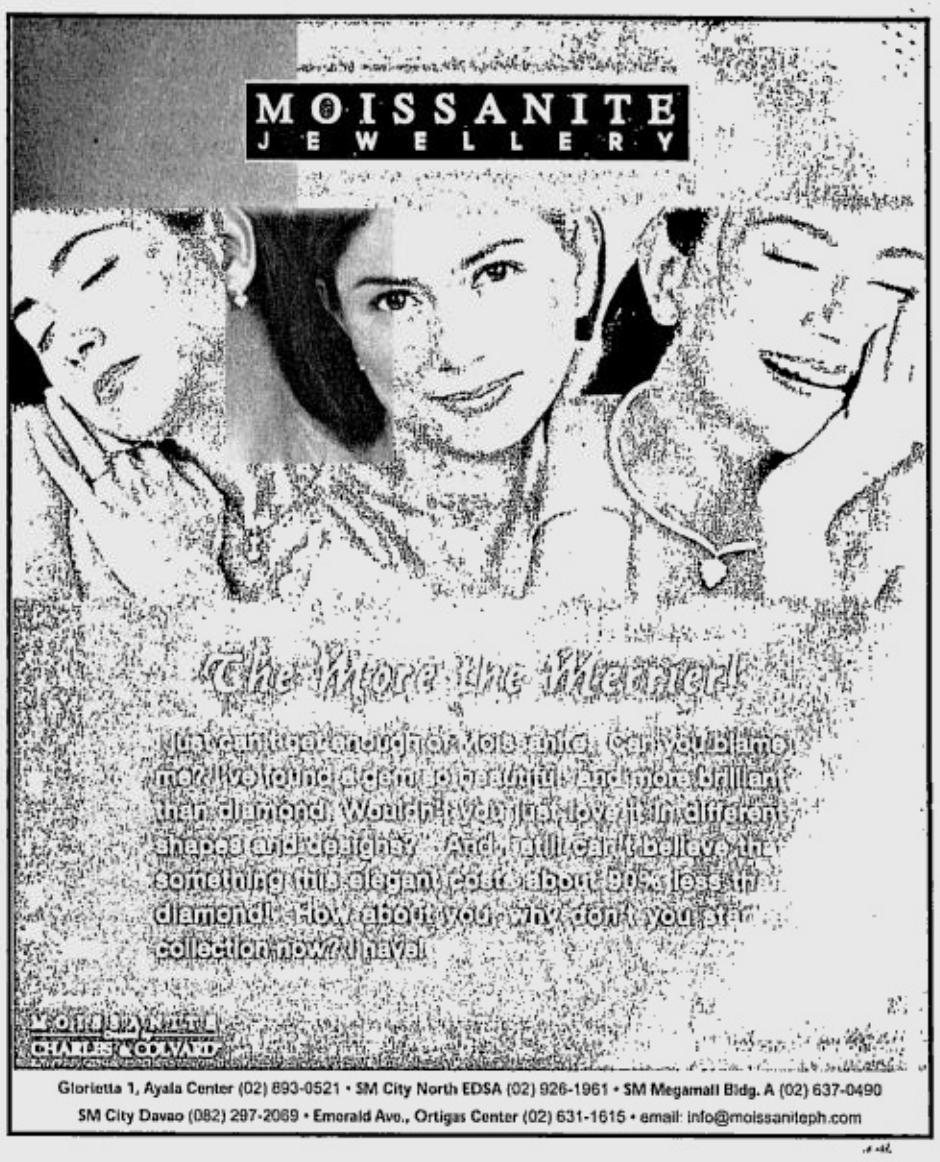


HEART TRUTH. US First Lady Laura Bush and the crimson silk and taffeta suit (left) she lent to a collection of red dresses being used to highlight "The Heart Truth," a campaign that will tour the US to inform women about heart disease. Bush wore the suit as she joined its designer, Oscar de la Renta (right), at the Fall 2004 Fashion Week in New York. REUTERS



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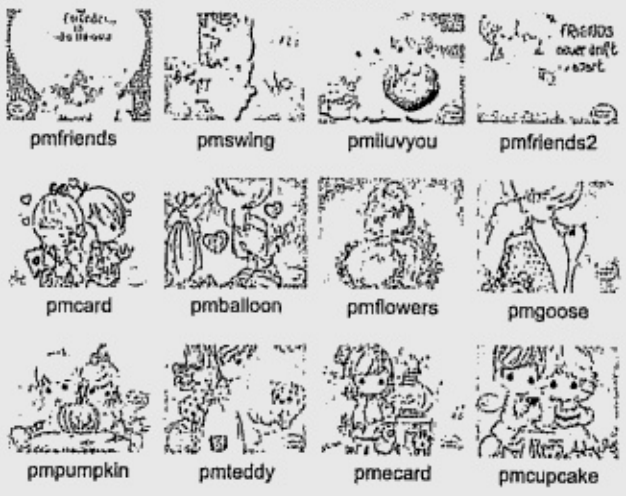

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Functional and luxurious

LV GOLF BAG. Monogram canvas and natural cowhide

LOUIS Vuitton offers several gift ideas for loved ones this Valentine.

For men, Louis Vuitton has gifts that are both functional and elegant.

Valentine's Day suggestions for women include the Diamond Heart Pendant in white gold, set with pave diamonds and engraved with the Louis Vuitton logo. A small photo can be fitted inside the heart-shaped case. The Garnet Heart Pendant is very similar, but the locket is in yellow gold. The LV logo is set on the garnet stone.

A retro piece of jewelry is the ID necklace in yellow gold and diamonds from the Spring-Summer 2004 Collection. Diamonds dot the "i" of the Louis Vuitton signature, and it can be worn either straight or at an angle. It comes in a mini monogram jewelry box in the shape of a square envelope.

The Envelope Charm in White Gold is inscribed with the address of the Louis Vuitton Paris flagship—101 Champs Elysees. It can be worn as a charm or with a necklace as a pendant. The envelope's hinged back opens and closes, allowing a message or small photograph to be placed inside.

Louis Vuitton's Alligator Cargo Pen, ideal for the businessmen on the move, is entirely sheathed in luxurious, tanned alligator skin. The leather has a matte finish and rich patina. Originally only available as a fountain pen, it is now offered in ballpoint and roller versions.

The GMT Réveil mechanical watch, a new addition to the successful Tambour collection, features the LV113 caliber, a very sophisticated Swiss-made mechanical movement with automatic winding. Louis Vuitton signatures are visible on the movement through a see-through sapphire glass on the back of the case. The watch has two functions: The GMT function displays a second time zone, and mechanical alarm clock. It is available in two different dials, brown or sand, both in two tones, and has an alligator leather strap with a folding buckle.

Sac Squash bag comes in Monogram Canvas and features side handles and outside pockets for a sporty look. Pocket linings are waterproof. The bag has cowhide leather tabs.

Louis Vuitton's recreation of its popular golf bag comes in Monogram canvas and natural cowhide and offers golfers all the necessary functionalities. It has four storage pockets for balls, accessories, cards, and clothing. The removable strap makes it ideal for carrying over the shoulder. The inside of the bag is compartmentalized for quick club repair.

Louis Vuitton is located at the G/F Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

LOUIS Vuitton Sac Squash

Win Valentin with new ph

THIS Valentine season, Globe Handyphone plays Cupid by giving you the chance to spend an unforgettable romantic rendezvous with your beloved in places like Venice, Australia or Phuket, Thailand, when you get the latest Sony Ericsson phones.

Sign up for Globe Handyphone's G-Plans or its new G-Flex Plans and these phones are available for free or on discounted rates.

Globe's G-Flex Plans are the newest, fully consumable plan range that allows you to maximize your allotted monthly credits, be it for Globe services like MMS, calling, texting, international calls, international SMS or downloading cool myGlobe contents.

As a bonus, Globe subscribers can now enjoy the new, lower flat rates of P6.50 per minute for Globe to Globe calls, while NDD and calls made to other networks are for P7 per minute only.

Get a chance to spend the Valentine's vacation of your dreams by accumulating points when you sign up for a G-Plan or a G-Flex Plan. points is as easy a messages to your friends. Each MMS lent to one raffle e

First prize is a night trip for two plus $500 pocket prize is a four-d

GLOBE'S G-Flex pl another level with f Phuket, Thailand.

Special gifts f

IF you are still looking for a Valentine's Day gift for someone special, check out products by Oakley that are designed for function and comfort.

Oakley eyeglasses are tough and ensure a snug and secure fit. The special three-point fit comfortably hugs the nose and the area behind the ears. The lens provides maximum clarity at all angles, and has the ability to block off ultraviolet and harmful blue light rays. It is coated with iridium which reflects glare and heightens contrast.

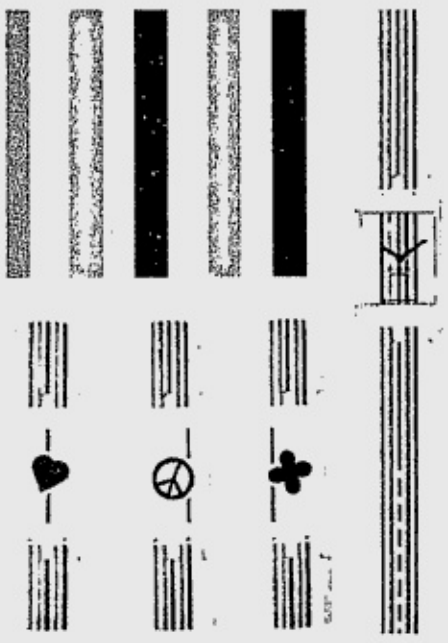
Oakley eyepieces like Monster Dog, Big Square Wire and the Plate try to blend function and style with comfort.

Oakley footwear is designed to support the feet, protect them from injury and provide traction. It offers non-slip comfort, premium urethane insole for shock absorption and ene maximum supp footwear include t Crank and the Twi

Oakley eyepiec at Oakley Premiun Almeda Optical, H cal, Magno Op Works, Perez Opti sion, Siapno-Tada

Heartbeat

COUNT the kisses and count the hours with Enigmatic Love—the Swatch Valentine's Day Special.



LUCKY in love or lucky in life? Swatch Lucky Stripes lets you in on a lucky secret: Turn over the dial to reveal a heart, a peace sign or a four-leaf clover.

THE SWATCH Bijoux ring, Love Explosion, gives off a whimsical air rife with romance. Its red color connotes roses, hearts and cherry-covered chocolates. Its perfect circular band symbolizes the chain of love.

Love Explosion has a unique wide stainless steel band adorned with a charm cluster of 17 deep-red synthetic resin shaped like hearts. Engraved inside its band is "I love you."

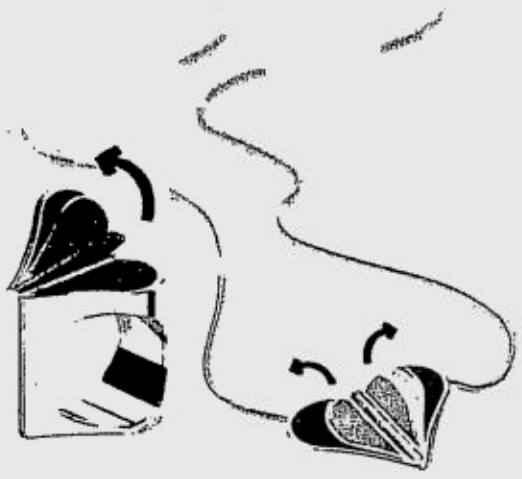
Meanwhile, the Swatch Bijoux Look In My Heart looks at first blush like an ordinary pendant, but opens up to reveal a crimson red heart.

And Swatch's Valentine's special is Enigmatic Love, which gives off the feeling of old romance.

Swatch is made in Switzerland. Gift Gate Inc. is the exclusive distributor of Swatch in the Philippines.

Swatch Enigmatic Love is available at all Gift Gate and Swatch Kiosks.

Swatch Love Explosion and Look In My Heart are available at Swatch SM Megamall and Glorietta 4 and selected Gift Gate stores and Swatch Kiosks.



ON a silk thread of silver, a symbol of love hangs balanced in the shape of a teardrop with Swatch Bijoux Look In My Heart. Open the pendant or the ring to reveal a red crimson heart.

LOVE bursts at the seams with the Swatch Love Explosion ring. Clusters of teardrop-shaped hearts seal and signify true love, especially with the words "I love you" engraved inside the ring. Available in red, blue and black.

How to say 'I l

VALENTINE stuffed toys are perfect for your sweethea younger sibling.

MAKE someone with this neckla

THE RUSS Best Friends frame, which plays the song "Stand By Me," brings back the best years of friendship.

TOUCH my heart and listen what I have to say. Curly puppies say "I love you" when their hearts are pressed.

Frame up

WITH "Love Ya" and "Hugs & Kisses" embroidered on their chests, nothing can be sweeter than plush Russ bears.

LISTEN to the romantic melody of "Some Day My Prince Will Come" from a bejeweled frame adorned with a windup frog. Let Angel Cheeks flutter with your message of love.

Let the harmony of "Stand By Me" bring back your fondest memories with your friends in another classic design of Russ musical frames.

Say "I Love You" in style. Send your feelings of love with Russ bears that have embroidered message accents on their chests. Or better yet, fluffy plush dogs that say your message of love with one squeeze of their heart.

So whether it's for a friend, a loved one or a family member, Valentine celebrations can never be complete without a Russ.

Russ is available at all Gift Gate Stores nationwide.

Write stuff

MONTBLANC, the world-renowned maker of luxury writing instruments, brings out the Boheme Je T'aime collection to celebrate the love month.

The Boheme Je T'aime fountain pen and ballpoint pen, made of precious resin, have three gold-plated rings with embossed logo and a gold-plated clip with individual serial numbers. The writing instruments are set with a synthetic ruby gemstone in a heart shape.

The sterling silver editions of the Boheme Je T'aime fountain pen and ballpoint pen come with three platinum-plated rings with the Montblanc logo embossed. The platinum-plated clip also contain the individual serial numbers, and the pens are set with a natural rose-

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Tips to a more romantic Day of Hearts

YOU don't have to hire a scriptwriter to help declare your love on Valentine's Day. A little planning, sincerity and creativity will make this day memorable for you and your loved one.

Here are some ideas from Hallmark Cards on how to jumpstart your romantic side.

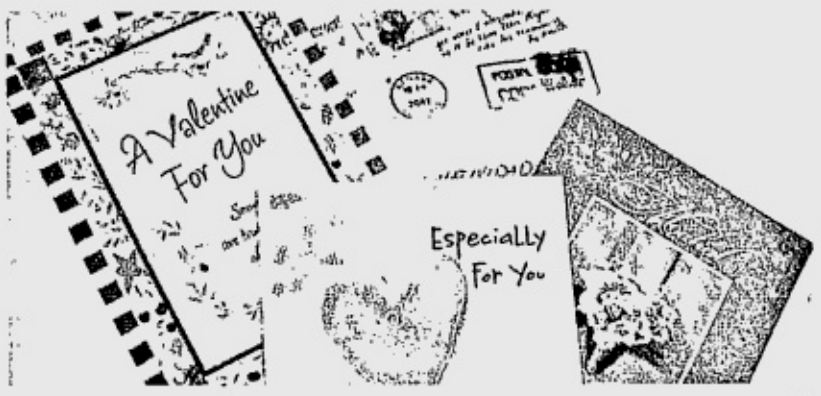
Give gift coupons. This is one gift that will go a long way. Compile a booklet of coupons which your sweetheart can avail of anytime throughout the year. Nothing fancy, just the things your loved one likes: breakfast in bed for two, perhaps, or 10-minute foot massage, one big smooch, etc.

Leave a love trail. Create a sweet and fragrant trail by leaving small candies, chocolates, flowers, love notes—or a combination of all four—from the door to where you'll be waiting. This will set the mood and create a sense of anticipation and excitement. Conclude by sharing a dinner painstakingly prepared with your own hands.

Pop love balloons. A balloon-filled room is sure to inspire warm feelings as much as a bunch of roses. For best effect, scribble a bunch of love notes and quotes, fold, then insert into the balloon before inflating. Add candies and chocolate kisses for an element of fun and surprise. Give your loved one a pin, then let her discover the depths of your love every time she hears "pop."

Write little notes. Long after the roses have wilted and the Valentine mood has died down, reminders of love can sure make one's day. Pick a small bottle or jar and fill it with folded notes expressing your love, how you'll show your love, etc. Create your own label and include instructions, such as "Take one daily or as needed..."

Create a love calendar. Make a calendar that starts from this year's Valentine's Day to next year's. Mark important dates in your history as a couple—the day you first met, or your first date, anniversary, etc. Also mark date nights (or days or weekends) every month. Make up your own holidays, like "Romantic Movie Marathon Day" or "A Walk in the Park Day."



Hallmark produced its first Valentine in 1913 and now offers more than 1,300 designs for every occasion. Valentine's Day is the second-largest card-sending holiday (behind Christmas) with more than 900 million exchanged each year.

Make this day even more memorable with heartfelt messages from Hallmark Cards, available at all National Book Store branches and other leading retail outlets nationwide.

ıe trips one plans

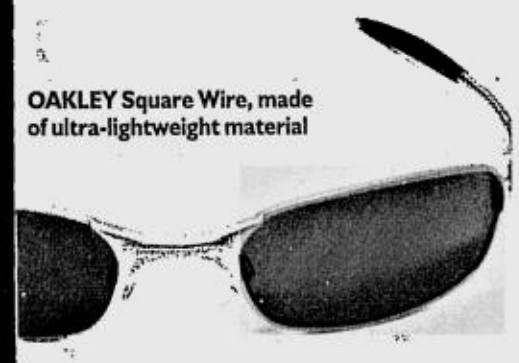
ıns and Sony Ericsson handsets take love to ree trips to Venice, Melbourne, Australia and

Earning more sending MMS loved ones or sent is equivatry.'

six-day, five-o Venice, Italy, noney. Second y, three-night tour for two of the wineries of Yarra valley in Melbourne, Australia, plus $300 pocket money. Third prize is a four-day, three-night trip to Phuket, Thailand with $200 pocket money.

This promo is ongoing until today, so head to the nearest Globe business center now.

for him



OAKLEY Square Wire, made of ultra-lightweight material

gy return for ort. Oakley ıe SI Shoe, the ch.

s are available Dealer stores: xecutive Optical, Optical al, Unique Vi- Ideal Vision Center, YES, George Optical, Sarabia Optical and Gem Time Plus.

Footwear and other items like timepieces, apparel and accessories are available at Rustan's (Makati, Alabang Town Center and Shangri-La Plaza), G-force (Podium and Rockwell), T102 (Greenbelt 3), Royal Sporting House and Olympic Village.

ove you'

rt or a

HOW can you express your affection on Valentine's Day? Robinsons Department Store (RDS) shows you how.

You can say "I love you" in many ways. Try giving cuddly stuffed toys and pillows, a bottle of wine with a teddy bear to bring a smile to his face, a Kiss Kiss Bears package (two bears and a balloon) that is guaranteed to melt her heart away or a cute mug with a mini bear.

You can also give something practical and useful. RDS has great fashion choices for friends and every member of the family. For men, consider the store's new checkered shirt collection. Want to try something intimate? There are also pajamas and boxer shorts.

For ladies, grab one from RDS' wide array of accessories like necklaces, bracelets, charms and hair clips. Or you can make it perky. Polka-dot bags are delightful gift alternatives for the young and the young-at-heart.

Discover more gift ideas at the RDS branch nearest you. Avail of free gift-wrapping services for every P300 purchase.

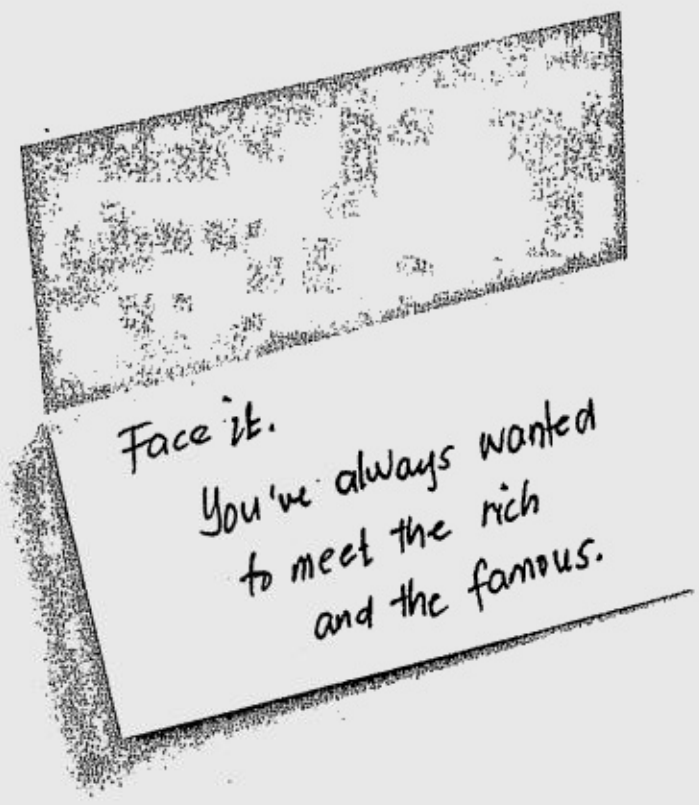
feel special ce.

colored sapphire in a heart shape.

For every purchase of a Montblanc Boheme Je T'aime fountain pen, customers will get either a Montblanc Boheme Key Fob or a Montblanc leather sienna collection pouch.

An elegant Montblanc Meisterstruck reversible belt comes with the sterling silver ball point, while the sterling silver fountain pen comes with a complementary overnight accommodation for two at the Manila Peninsula Hotel, complete with dinner at Old Manila and breakfast at the Nielsen's. Offer is good until Feb. 15.

Montblanc is exclusively available in Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Alabang Town Center and at the Montblanc shops in Rockwell Power Plant Mall and Robinsons Place Manila.



New Magnolia Creamy Delights. Delectable desserts in a cup. Fiesta favorites like Leche Flan, Maja Blanca and Ube. Made with the rich good taste that can only come from Magnolia.

Magnolia Creamy Delights

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Brittany breaks ground for Neo-Victorian homes at La Posada in Brittany Bay

Brittany Corporation takes another milestone step towards the completion of La Posada, the strictly upper-crust residential community fast taking shape along the South Super Highway in Sucat facing Laguna de Bay, with the groundbreaking ceremony this Sunday for the Duettos on Victorianne Row.

Victorianne Row in La Posada at Brittany Bay (left) is inspired by those famous Victorian homes on "postcard row" in San Francisco (right). Faithful to its Alamo Square inspiration, similar attention to detail–including the architecture and mood–is devoted to the design and construction of the Victorianne Row.

Driven by its vision of creating outstanding and uniquely themed communities that bring delight to people who appreciate the finer things in life, Brittany is the pioneer in the development of theme-based, master-planned, upscale residential communities.

La Posada, inspired by those world-famous Victorian residences in San Francisco, is the residential community of Brittany Bay. Victorianne Row, a section of residences within La Posada inspired by Alamo Square's "postcard row", consists of cozy clusters of Duettos and Quadrilles, homes perfect for families and individuals who have begun to fulfill their dreams of success.

The Duettos and Quadrilles of Victorianne Row are the product of an ingenious concept applied by Brittany that maximizes privacy and a sense of space. Duettos are duplex units but with a unique twist, since these are configured back-to-back for privacy, unlike the usual side-by-side duplex.

Each Duetto is afforded outside space, conveying a feeling of relaxed comfort. Quadrilles are clusters of four residences each, with every unit sharing two walls out of four, similarly, to enhance private space. Each unit has its own view and separate entrance. All Victorianne Row homes will consist of three levels with a two-car garage equipped with automatic doors on the ground level, and some units allowing for attic space.

The charming and comfortable residences at La Posada are built to last, with elegant finishes, compact layouts and lovely, painstaking details that reflect impeccable taste and style. All features of the Victorianne Row homes, including their simple but distinguished facades, are expressions of your success and the lifestyle you desire. The flat canopies, bay windows, roof shingles, front steps and eaves with brackets invest each home with an endearing character.

Apart from Victorianne Row, two-storey individual homes are also available at La Posada, in six different configurations.

With upscale amenities that include provisions for high-speed internet connection, state-of-the-art security alarm systems and underground cabling for power, communication and cable TV, La Posada strikes a balance between old-world charm and the technology-driven conveniences of 21st century living.

With 90 percent of units already sold, La Posada offers its limited number of fortunate residents more than just a place to stay in. Strategically and conveniently located, La Posada is easily accessible even as it affords privacy and a distinctive ambience found in no other exclusive, up-market community in the country. The site is just 50 meters from the east side of the Sucat Interchange, 25 minutes away from Makati and 10 minutes away from Alabang.

Just a gated entrance away from La Posada, Brittany Bay boasts a uniquely laid out commercial area featuring intimate cafes and restaurants where you can dine or simply sit back to watch the sunset clothe Laguna de Bay in glorious hues of light.

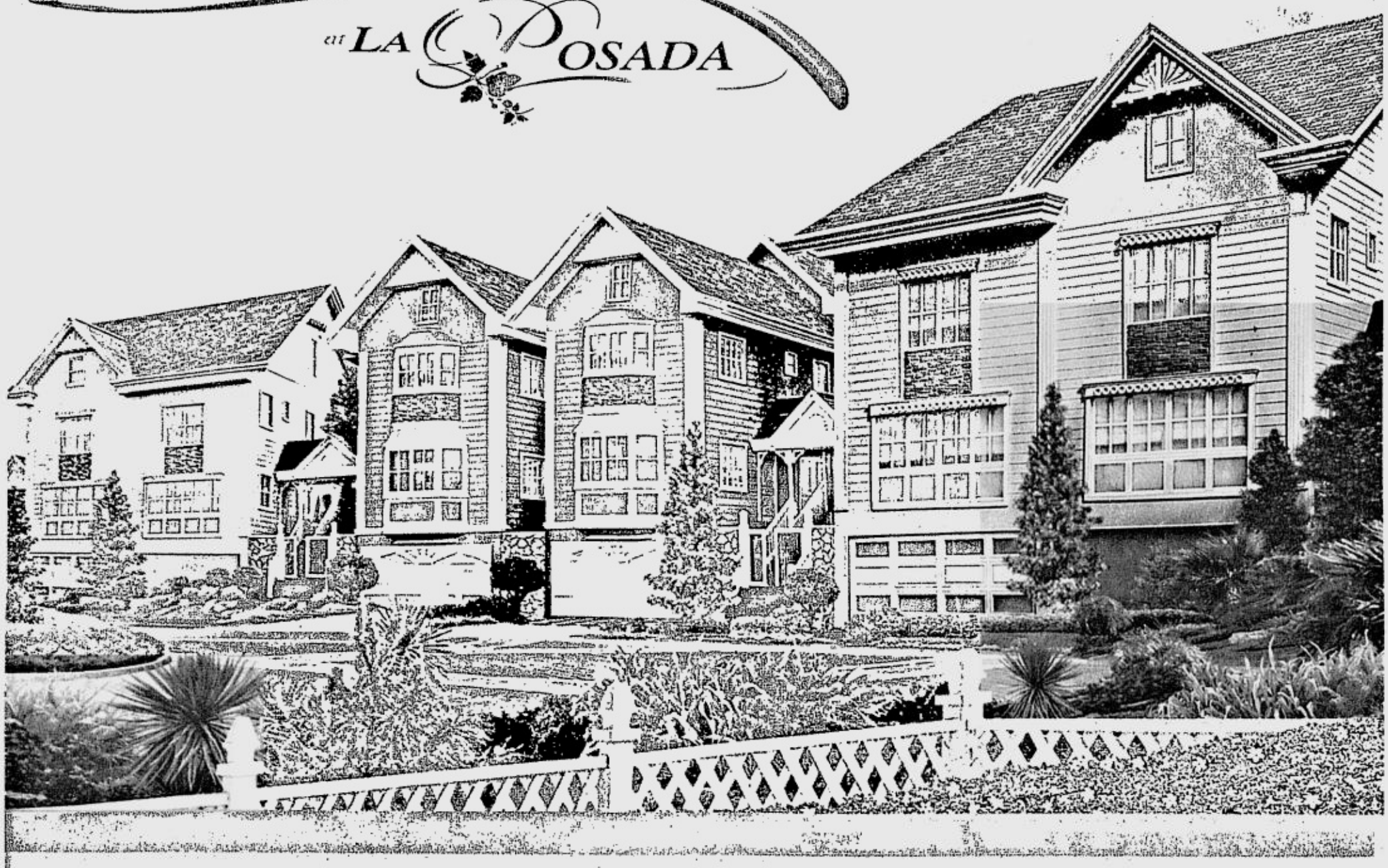
Thanks to Brittany's vision, you won't have to covet those Victorian "Painted Ladies" on Alamo Square anymore. You can have your very own Victorianne home in a beautiful place called La Posada without even going out of town, because of Brittany's tireless resolve to provide you with not just a place to stay, but a home to live in.

Just like Alamo Square in San Francisco, Victorianne Row at La Posada is sure to offer a visual treat. And they're breaking ground for the Duettos this weekend.

ADVT L

Victorianne

at LA POSADA



First Taste of Success

Welcome to the fold of the distinguished class. Victorianne at La Posada in Brittany Bay graciously opens its doors to families and individuals whose success is now being fulfilled. These cozy, stylish nests, just 15 minutes from Makati and 10 minutes from Alabang, mark the beginning of fine living, romantically portrayed in Neo-Victorian rows of Duplexes and Quadrilles. Your new home now waits for you.

For bigger families, you can also choose from our individual homes at La Posada.

Want to know more? Call: 850 2868/850 6986 • www.brittany.com.ph

Brittany CORPORATION

Getting there is easy: Take the Sucat Exit of South Luzon Expressway. From the Sucat Interchange, take the East Service Road and it's only 50 meters from there. Just look for the Brittany Bay billboard.

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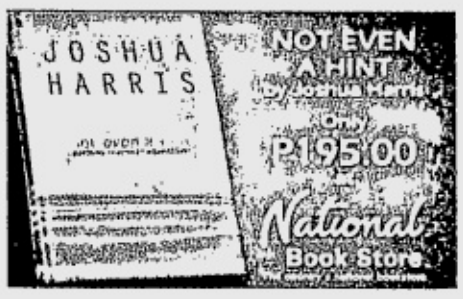

The violent bear Valentine's away

On the day of romance, let's open a can of worms, like pretty babes of Manila's chi-chi set being beaten up by their boyfriends

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

MY FRIEND had a believe-it-or-not tale which I chose to believe. One late night he was walking back to his resort cottage when he heard some noise. He craned his neck, cocked his ears and opened wide his eyes. In the next cottage was this hunk of a guy throwing stuff, including the lamp, at his girl, and he began to beat her up. What my friend found hard to believe wasn't so much the battering as the fact that they were a cool couple in Manila's chi-chi set.

As that episode was narrated in the office, my staff said they weren't surprised at all because—and this was what I found hard to believe (but believed anyway again)—they also knew of many other "cool couples" where the guys, hunks even, lay their hands on their girlfriends, who are themselves among Manila's hot babes. How could young couples, touted as beautiful pairs, keep such dark secrets beneath their lifestyle of glamour and glitz?

Media have tackled domestic violence regularly among the marginalized social classes but hardly, if at all, among the fabled socially visible set.

Battering doesn't go with Prada and Jimmy Choo, right? Wrong.

You'd think sophisticated, glamorous and seemingly confident women—the type who perennially graces society and style pages—would know better than to bear violence in a relationship. Apparently not.

This may seem like a feel-lousy topic, a downer, for Valentine's Day, but it is very real nonetheless, and V-Day seems to be a day as good as any to open a can of worms, not only a box of chocolates. Yes, several months after Kris Aquino opened hers.

It doesn't have to be physical violence. It could be battering of the mental, emotional and psychological kind which leads a girl to lose her sense of self, not only her self-esteem, to the point that she's rendered non-functional, to the point that she's pushed to the edge. She reaches the edge and doesn't need a nudge to fall off that cliff.

I've seen women, otherwise stylish and peaking in their careers, suffer nervous breakdown after a breakup. Who hasn't seen one or hasn't been through one, at least a near-break-

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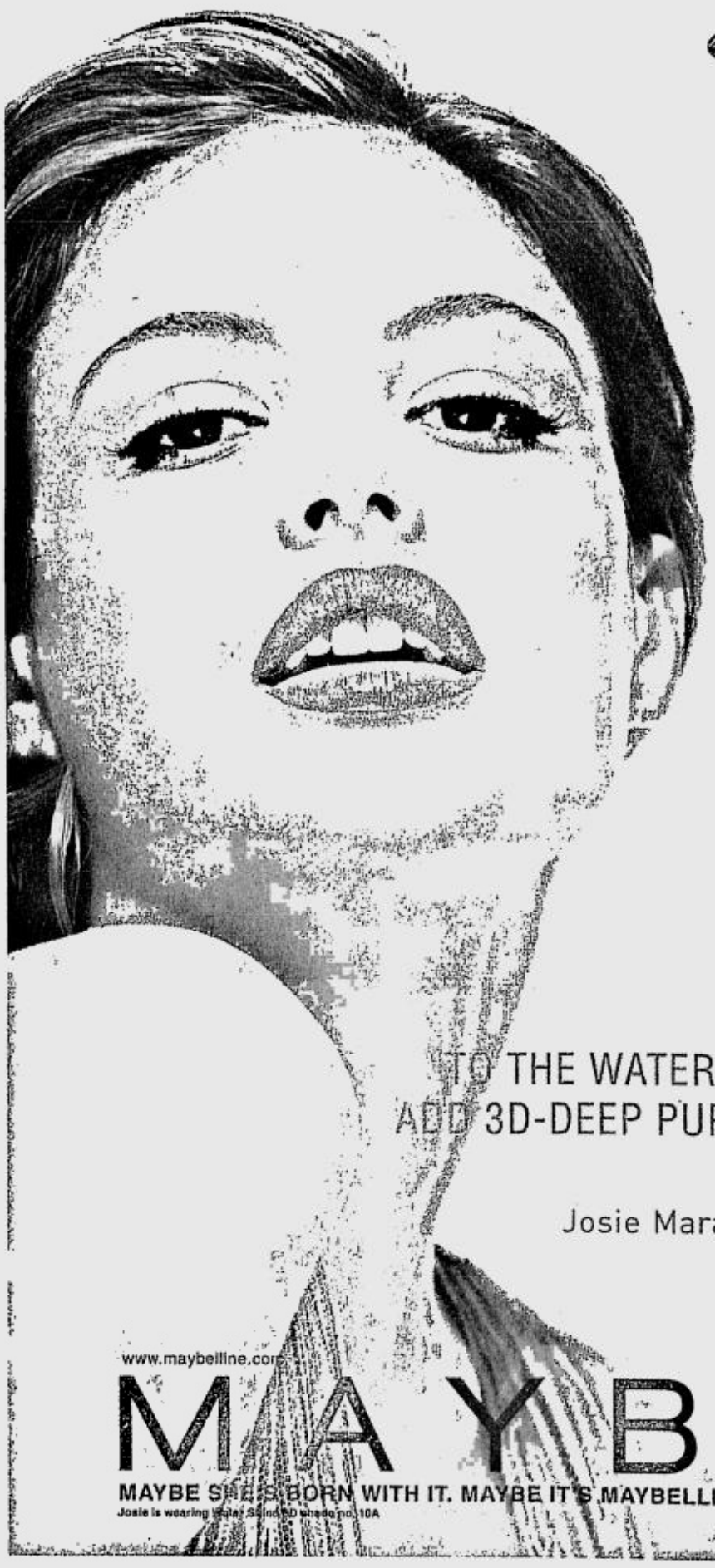

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Josie is wearing Water Shine 3D shade no. 10A

She's torn between conflicting family loyalties

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

DEAR Tita Dulce,

I got a very good job after college, but after three years, I got married, and my husband and I lived in an apartment of our own. When our baby came a year later, I quit the job to be a full-time mother. The problem is that my parents, siblings and relatives have been making me feel guilty for having a family of my own.

Whenever I buy something that might be considered a "treat" for myself, say, a cell phone, I feel guilty because my siblings act envious of me. I feel guilty, too, whenever my husband and I take a vacation trip.

And now that my husband is having a house built for us, you can imagine how big that guilt feeling has grown.

I often overhear my siblings saying they need or want this or that, even if they're asking for something I'd consider too expensive even for myself. Even my aunts—who are all professionals, employed and have families of their own—complain to me of their financial needs. When my parents get sick, my siblings grumble about my neglect, not aware of the aid I send for the occasion, much less of how much of my separation benefits went to my mom when I quit my job.

My relatives want to depend on me still, forgetting that I myself am now totally dependent on my husband. Still, my mother could be right—as she had been heard to say, I got married when I had helped them for only three years.

Because of this, I tend to stop myself from enjoying my own family and the resources that my husband has been producing for us. This is affecting my relationship with my husband and my kid, as well as my self-respect. It seems I have to choose between being a bad daughter to my parents and a bad sister to my siblings, or being a bad wife to my husband and bad mother to my own child.

LEAH

We should honor our parents, that's true. But the Good Book also says that when a man marries, he should leave his parents and stick to his wife.

As to the new wife, she is told to "forget thine own people and forget thy father's house." I'm not saying that one cancels the other. I'm saying, though, that one qualifies the other by suggesting that parents should accept limitations in the ways (not degree, though) their children honor them once the children get married.

To me, then, that means that parents should raise their children not to be revenue-earning cattle, but to be independent and moral adults who will be able to raise good families of—and on—their own.

So, when a daughter becomes a good wife to her husband, a good mother to her child, and a good manager of her home's and husband's resources, then she is also honoring her parents by showing everyone that her parents had reared and prepared her correctly for her adult role.

You are, of course, still bound to give your parents and siblings your utmost in cases of emergency, particularly when life is at stake. However, they are all able-bodied, so providing for their daily bread, much less for your siblings' whims and wishes, is not your duty.

> Parents should accept limitations in the ways their children honor them once the children get married

As to your aunts, lend them your ears, but not your husband's money. They are the least of your priorities, so let their own husbands and their children worry about them.

E-mail titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City

Philips Pixel Plus Plasma TV with Best-in-Picture quality breaks new ground in TV technology

PHILIPS MARKS another milestone in TV history with ultra-high resolution Pixel Plus technology in its top-of-the-line Pixel Plasma TV to give the clearest, most natural detail

Philips makes history in TV technology yet again with the release of its top-of-the-range Pixel Plasma TV sets incorporating the unique Pixel Plus technology. Following the introduction of the first 100Hz sets in 1998, Natural Motion in 1995 and Digital Natural Motion and Active Control in 1999, Philips' latest Pixel Plus Plasma TV now sets a new industry standard for TV picture quality.

Incorporating impressive image processing improvements, Philips' new Pixel Plasma TV brings incredible sharpness, detail and depth to pictures onscreen. Pixel Plus technology doubles the horizontal resolution of standard TVs and increases vertical resolution. The result: a breathtaking picture of over two million pixel resolution per frame. This means amazingly sharp pictures with clear and natural detail for all types of input - from normal TV and VCR to DVD.

Best picture quality

The set incorporates advanced picture processing software that more than doubles the horizontal resolution of the standard 720x525 NTSC resolution to 2048-pixel horizontal and 1050-line vertical resolution. The doubling of the vertical resolution eliminates even the fine structure seen on close-up that is noticeable in other TVs. The extra detail of Pixel Plus also improves the distinction between foreground and background, thereby increasing the perceived depth as well.

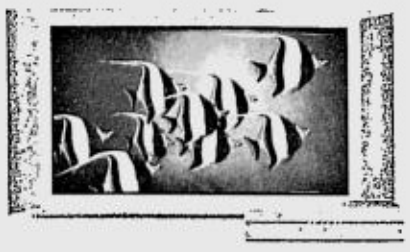
Such ultra-high resolution comes without compromising field flicker. The set shows stable and flicker-free pictures that are less straining on the eyes, to allow for more relaxed TV viewing. It deliver supreme contrast, brightness and focus all over the screen - reflections are reduced, even in daylight viewing, to give brilliant colors with minimum distortion.

Pixel Plus processes incoming TV signals, with advanced motion compensation techniques, correcting the reproduction of movement in the picture (Pixel Plus complements Philips' industry-reference Digital Natural Motion system). The effects of motion compensation are most noticeable in feature movies, which intrinsically have notoriously juddery motion when shown on TV. The end result is smooth movement reproduction of moving objects on screen and greater viewing pleasure.

Superb sound and easy operation with a touch of style

The new Pixel Plasma TV tops off its excellent picture quality with superb high-power audio performance, delivering up to 60 W RMS into five integrated speakers and a sub-woofer for low frequency bass.

Reflecting the state-of-the-art technology, the Pixel Plus Plasma set has a sophisticated look, incorporating the very essence of European styling. Sleek and flat, it can be mounted on the wall like a painting or occupy a place of pride in its specially designed arc stand on any den or living room. The Pixel Plus Plasma TV's design has won a host of prestigious design awards around the world, making this set not only technologically superb but also stylishly ahead as well.



The new Philips Pixel Plus Plasma Flat TV.

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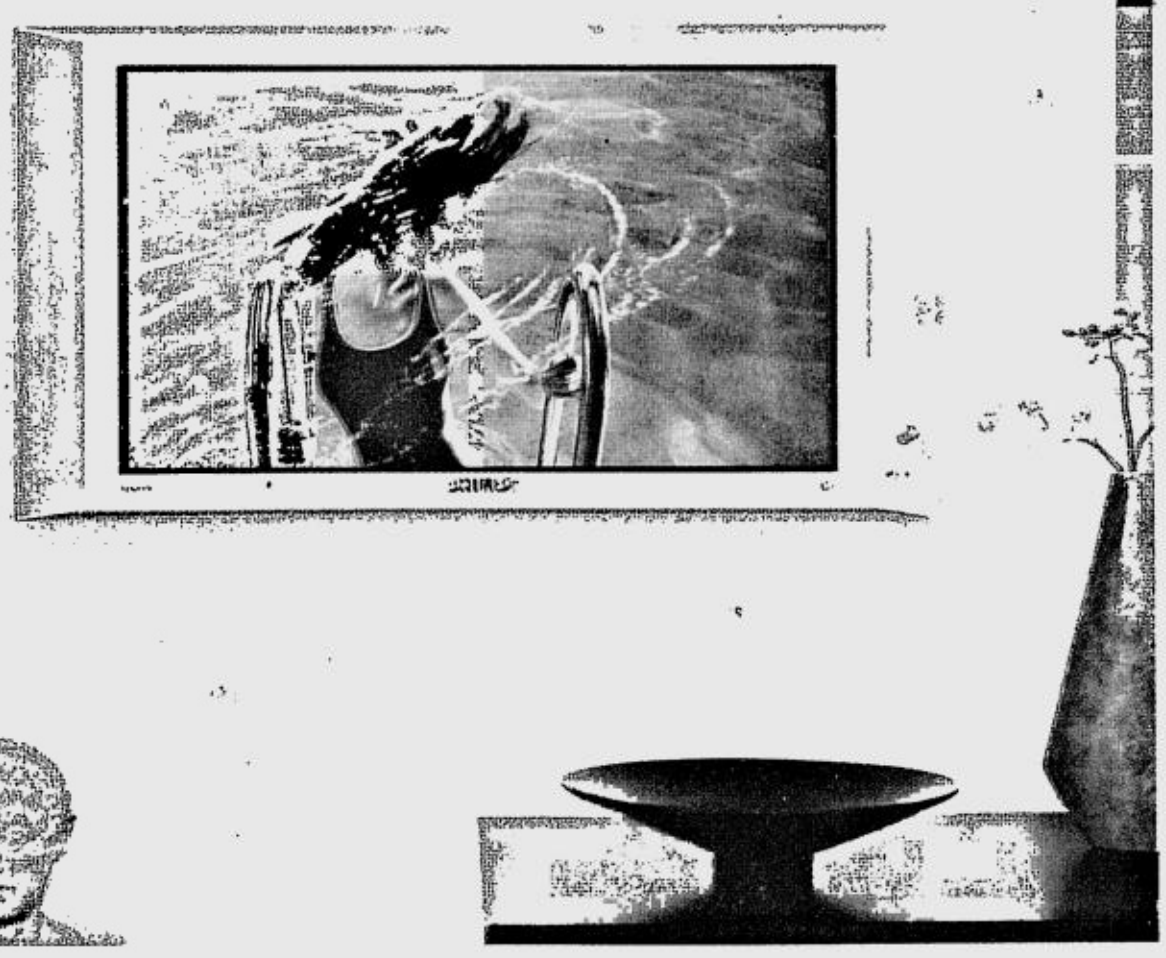

You'll find any excuse to stay home with the new Philips Pixel Plus Plasma TV. One look at the Philips Pixel Plus Plasma TV and you'll see much more than a sleek design. By dramatically increasing the number of pixels, our award-winning picture processor dramatically improves the picture quality for an astonishing level of detail, depth and clarity.

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The violent bear Valentine's away

From page E1

down?

I've come across girls who couldn't deliver (work, that is) because they were breaking up with their boyfriends. I've seen it once too often these days when they say it's hard to find a guy—the guy-girl ratio isn't good—and harder still to keep one, with cutthroat competition out there. (You bare your navel, the next girl bares her boobs. So much for a good fight.)

They say single girls have it tougher now than in my time when the biggest problem was how to circumvent the curfew.

What do I end up telling these girls who have just lost their boyfriends or who don't have dates on Valentine (yeah, right, the day is only a commercial pitch for the malls and restos)? Go to the gym. Do yoga.

That's not a joke. Exercise is supposed to release "happy" hormones which lift you from depression. But more than that it develops your interest—in yourself. It's one of the ways to pamper yourself, and self-pampering is a girl's best friend—next to a hilarious wise gay. Okay, next to shopping.

I've noticed that girls who nurture interests other than bagging a guy are those most likely to survive ill-fated relationships. These must be interests and obsessions beyond your work and career, way beyond your family and boyfriends.

I've also noticed that girls or women who can thrive on being alone are those who love to read. Women who can snuggle down to a good book are those who aren't afraid to be alone. In fact, they cherish solitude when their mind can wander and be enriched. Idle time means stimulated minds, and a stimulating mind is sexy (yes, after you flash your navel).

Relationships yield dependence on the other. That's both an upside and downside. Battered women can't leave a relationship because they've become too dependent on it. It takes a sense of self-empowerment to want to leave a violent or crummy relationship, but it's a gradual process. You must first realize that you deserve more than crumbs, that you deserve respect, honesty and integrity from the other.

A relationship, if it is to work, must enhance you, and the other. It must make you feel beautiful, even if you're not, and feel great about yourself, even if you keep tripping on your stilettos. A guy, if he's worth fighting for, must nurture you—past your silly stress. Otherwise, you should not take any whacking from him.

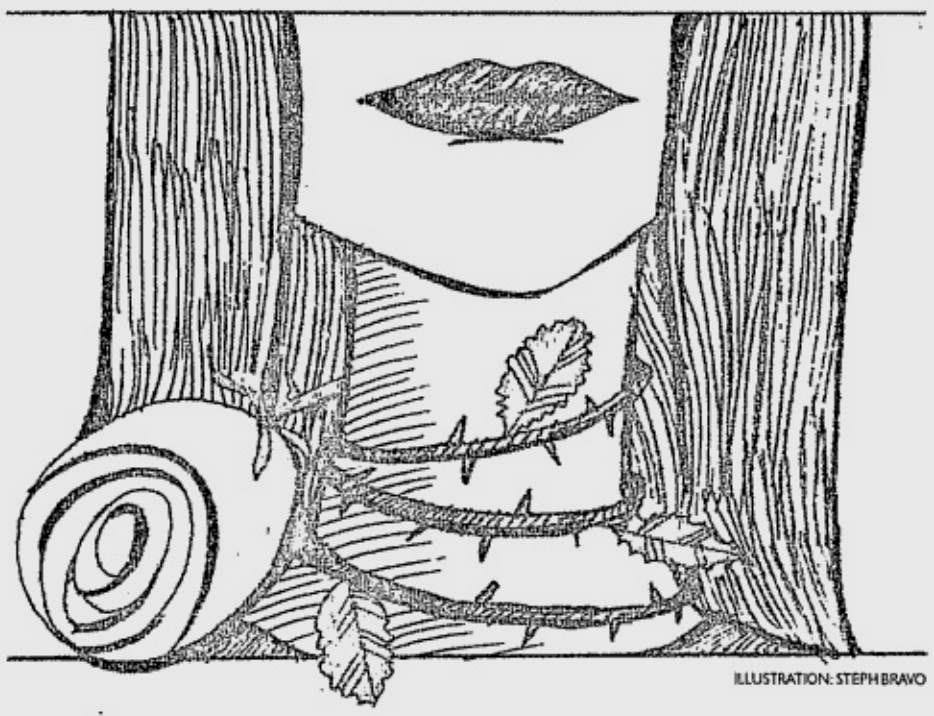


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Having said that, I repeat what I always tell my staffers who come to me after their prince turns into a frog. You will live. Nobody dies of a broken heart—when you're below 99 years old.

So go, girl!

Vogue editors visit

While almost everyone is in collective self-flagellation over politicians, there are those who continue to make a pitch for what's good and marketable about the country. Peninsula's director of public relations Mariano Garchitorena had dinner with Australian journalists who, he said, not only loved their stay here but also went away impressed with the creativity they had seen.

They were Leigh-Ann Pow, deputy editor of Vogue Australia; Linda Smith, executive editor of Marie Claire; James McRory, editor of Audi Magazine; and Clare Barker, writer for Harper's Bazaar.

For her part Jeannie Goulbourn also hosted a cozy get-together for her longtime friend, Marie Christian Marek, who hosts the leading fashion TV show in Europe. The French broadcast journalist, who's based in Paris, is a regular visitor in the country because she loves scuba diving. Over dinner with Gina Lopez, French Ambassador Renee Veyret, Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert, Marie brought up the possibility of staging a design project showcasing abaca. She believes the native fiber has immense possibilities.

That's a good idea coming from a seasoned fashion journalist who's long associated with such fashion giants as Karl Lagerfeld and Calvin Klein.

E-mail the author at tsanjuan@skyinet.net

Philips awarded Superbrand!

(From Left) Superbrands Asia Pres. Peter Jeffrey; DTI Asst. Sec. for Consumer Welfare and Trade Regulations Group J. Norman dela Rama Jocson; and PCE Gen. Mgr. Angelo Valenton

AWARDED Superbrands PHILIPPINES 2004

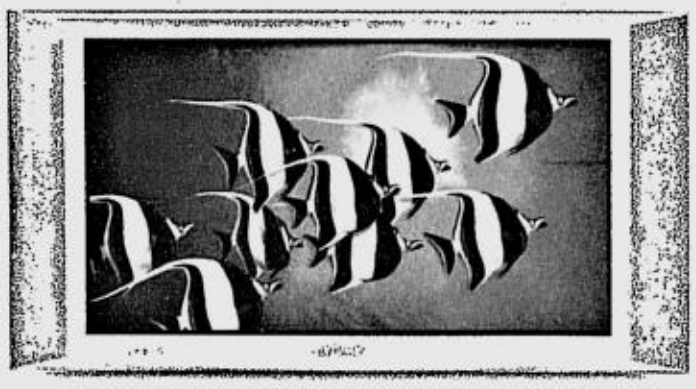
Philips, one of the world's biggest electronics companies and Europe's largest, enjoys an enviable reputation as a pioneer in innovations and inventions. Recently, the Dutch electronics giant added another feather to its cap when it was hailed as a superbrand after being included in the Superbrand list for the year 2004 in the Philippine market.

Founded in England in 1991, Superbrand is the world's leading independent arbiter of brand performance operating in 32 markets worldwide.

"We feel extremely honored and proud for this distinction, which is yet another validation of Philips' goal of making things better for every consumer," says Philips Consumer Electronics General Manager Angelo Valenton. "We are indebted to our consumers and trade partners who continue to patronize and support our products. This is one of many motivations that inspire us to come up with innovative products and services that improve people's lives," adds Valenton.

Philips was nominated as a "Superbrand" by the Philippine Superbrand Council that comprises of luminaries in the media and communications industry in the Philippines. The strict criteria of selection of a Superbrand includes market dominance, customer loyalty, goodwill, longevity and market acceptance.

Among the innovative products that make Philips such a popular brand are the Philips Pixel Plus Plasma TV and the LX8000SA Home Theater System, both of which provide cinema-style viewing for a unique "Best Seat in the House" experience.



The Pixel Plus Plasma TV combines elegance and substance. It is equipped with the award winning Pixel Plus technology, which delivers increased resolution at a record-breaking two million pixels per picture frame. Paired with the LX8000SA Home Theater world System that gives total immersion in movies and music, Philips Pixel Plus Plasma truly gives you plenty of great excuses to stay home.

These are merely some of the remarkable products that were borne out of Philips' rich legacy of innovations and inventions—a legacy that enables Philips to always be at the forefront of several remarkable milestones.

For instance, Philips invented the compact audiocassette tape and set a global standard for tape recording that has never been altered since. Other key breakthroughs came in the processing, storage and transmission of images, sound and data, which resulted in the invention of the Laser Vision optical disc, the Compact Disc and the Digital Versatile Disc.

Philips is also active in the development of the Blu-ray Disc, the next generation optical disc format that delivers the highest data rate of any consumer media and the highest recording density.

Built on a bedrock of invention and innovation, Philips today holds close to 100,000 of the world's patents in inventions and this figure is growing, thanks to research, which has always been Philips' core strength.

With such noteworthy inventions and innovations, the recognition of Philips as a Superbrand comes as no surprise. Being included in the Superbrands list surely corroborates Philips' goal of making things better for consumers.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Events place sets love date amid tropicana

THE GAZEBO Royale will feature an acoustic band and a string ensemble for Valentine's Day. Leading caterers such as Au France Cuisine, Better Pan Catering Services, Cater Club Tri-Chefs Food Corp., Hizon's Catering, Isla Filipina and the Manila Catering will provide food.

The Valentine dinner will be set amidst elegantly landscaped tropical paradise gardens of Gazebo Royale's Champagne and Phoenix Pavilions, filled with palms, cycads, flowering trees and bushes, man-made lakes, fountains, brooks and waterfalls.

The garden setting was designed by landscape artist Yuyung La'O and executed by Ron's Garden Inc.

Gazebo Royale is located at 29 Visayas Ave. Ext., Quezon City. It is suited to wedding receptions as it is near such churches as Our Lady of Consolation and San Lorenzo Ruiz in Tandang Sora; San Nicolas de Tolentino and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Project 6; Immaculate Heart of Mary in UP Village, Diliman; Heart of Jesus and Mary and St. Peter Parish in West Triangle.

Call 9206505 or 9249924. E-mail mygarden@info.com.ph or visit www.gazeboroyale.com.

GAZEBO Royale: love amid the greens

Flower 'tiangge' on restaurant row

TAKE a romantic and leisurely stroll on the artistically paved walkways of Tomas Morato in Quezon City this Valentine.

Don't worry if you haven't bought the flowers your special someone expects. You can get her something along the way as Quezon City's well-known restaurant strip is also a plant and flower *tiangge* this weekend of love and romance.

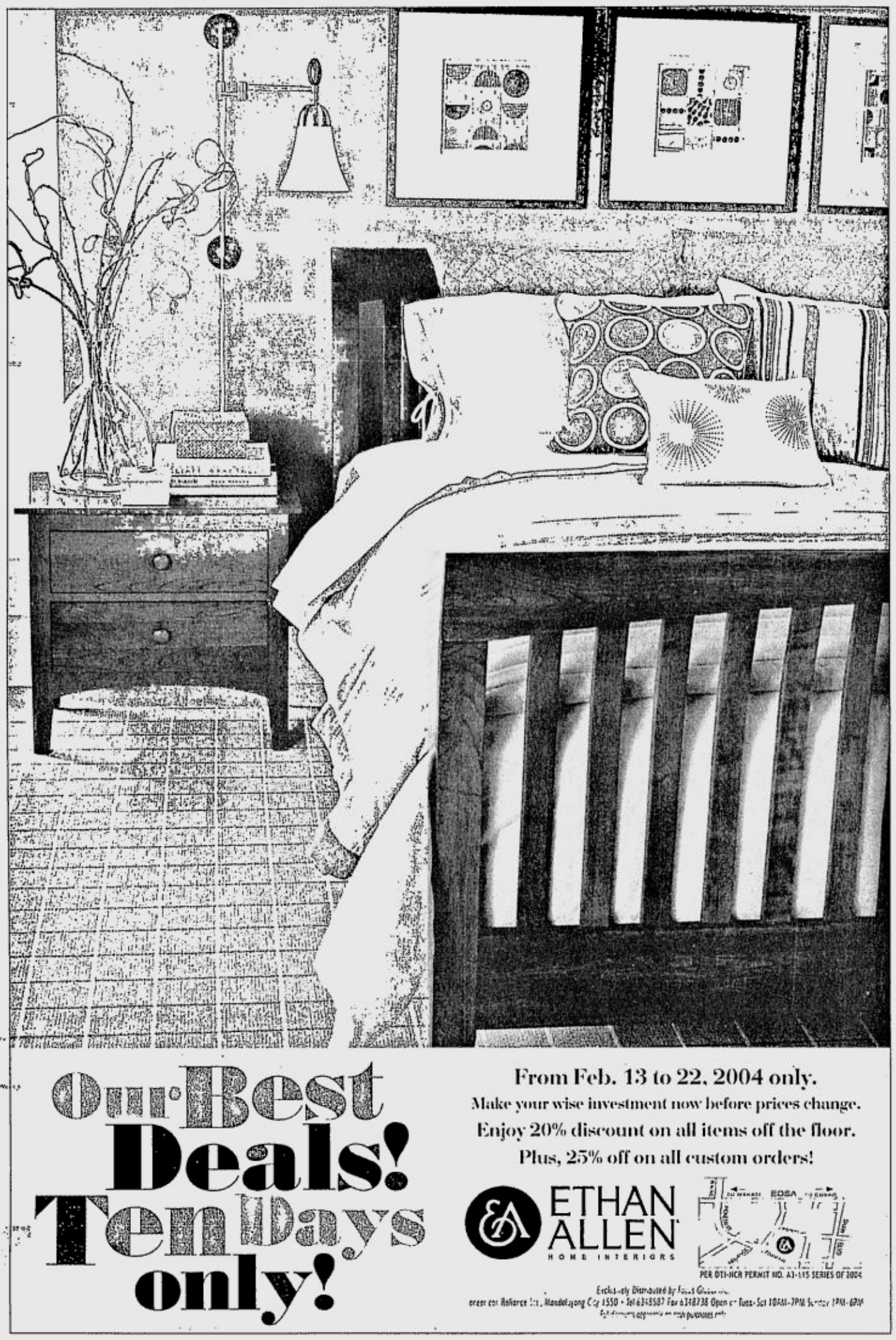
Until Feb. 15, assorted plants, flowers and other garden accessories will be on sale at street corners of Morato. If you don't want to go for traditional flowers and want something different, get her a bonsai, dishgarden, terrarium, cacti and other succulents, waterfall Zen gardens, culinary and medicinal herbs or items to bring

luck in the year of the green monkey.

Or get inspiration from the displays in different stalls.

An added feature to the sidewalk *tiangge* is a lecture-demonstration on flower arrangement by Ikebana professor Serapion S. Metilla on Feb. 14, 3 p.m., at the Bank of Philippine Islands compound. It is free to the public.

Call 9394593/ 5330759 / 0920-2486692.



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Make your wise investment now before prices change.
Enjoy 20% discount on all items off the floor.
Plus, 25% off on all custom orders!

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Hair Loss:
A Woman's Heartache

As a woman, you place more value on your "crowning glory" that when hair loss happens, the effects in your image and self-esteem are devastating. You may also feel that there is less support for you in dealing with your hair loss. At **Svenson International,** you have hope in facing your fears and solving your problem. Trust our consultants' expert advice and our proven effective treatments to stop hair loss and to keep your hair thick and lush again---exactly the way you want it to be.

For women's hair loss, Svenson is here to ease your worries. Call us today.

Woman AT Svenson

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Where's the best place to fall in love?

(turn the page sideways to find out)

Fall in love all over again in the Romantic Concerts at the Grand Atrium on February 13, 14 & 15.
Serenade your sweetheart at The 5th with Acoustic Performances on February 7 & 8.
Enjoy magic moments as you watch live bands perform at the Streetscape all Friday and Saturday nights of February.
Say "I love you" with Armott's Tarlets. For every minimum single receipt purchase of P 2000 at all outlets at Streetscape, the customer is entitled to a FREE GIFT BOX from Armott's.*

* Customers can redeem their gift box by presenting their receipts at the redemption booth at Streetscape.
Promo period is for February 13 only. Redemption period is on February 13, from 9pm to 12mn only.

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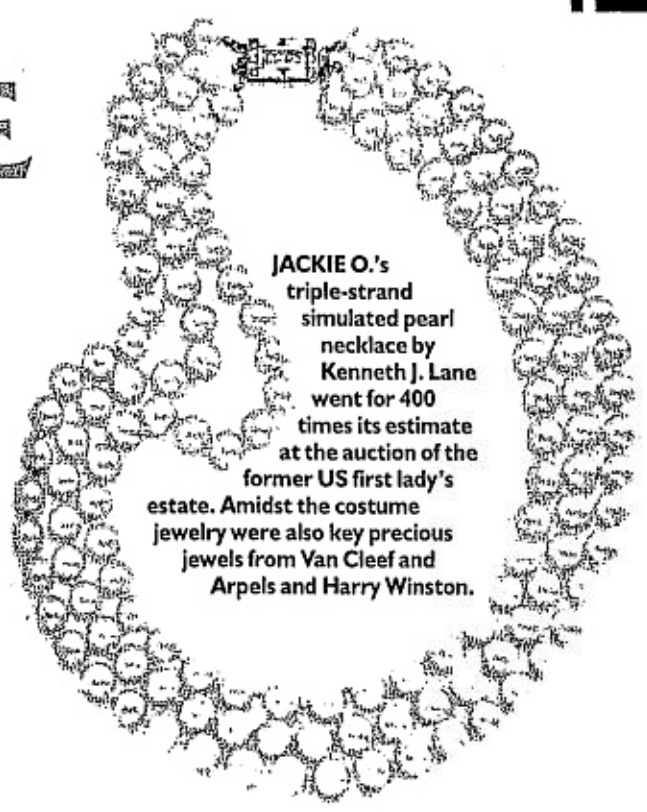
LIFESTYLE

Sweeping for treasure

Who says you can't sell your jewelry and other cherished pieces through an international auction house like Sotheby's?



JACKIE O.'s triple-strand simulated pearl necklace by Kenneth J. Lane went for 400 times its estimate at the auction of the former US first lady's estate. Amidst the costume jewelry were also key precious jewels from Van Cleef and Arpels and Harry Winston.

By Kitty Go
Contributor

DID you ever wonder how much you could get for that ruby and diamond necklace which you last wore in 1974? Or when was the last time you got married and wore a tiara that now sits on its own throne—in the bank vault?

Aside from taking these pieces to your friendly neighborhood jeweler who will buy it for a low price or remake it into something else, you could sell your pieces through an auction house where, to put it simply, your piece will be sold at an international open market for what the current market or collectors think it is worth.

Getting swept in

Twice a year, specialists from auction houses travel to key cities to appraise and catalogue pieces that are potential auction material.

This activity is called a "sweep," that is, "sweeping consignments into an auction." Quek Chin Yeow, senior director of Jewelry for Sotheby's China and Southeast Asia is conducting such a sweep in Manila from Feb. 11-13.

Because of logistics, organization and printing lead times, sweeps are generally done three months ahead of the sale date. Therefore the February visit is for the end-of-April sale in Hong Kong. That means better start dusting those pieces that last saw light when you were Carnival Queen of Navotas.

Getting to be part of a sweep is not as difficult or intimidating as many think. You can make an appointment with the Sotheby's Philippine representative office. They will ask you a few questions about the pieces, like what they are made of, how old they are, etc.

Technically, for international sales, a piece must be worth about US$7,000-10,000, but there are exceptions, such as signed pieces from famous jewelry houses or designers like Cartier, Van Cleef, Bulgari, Andrew Grima, David Webb, etc.

Another special case could be provenance, such as the Manuel L. Quezon lots Sotheby's sold last year which were priced in the hundreds, or the Jackie O. sale of April 1996 that included her costume jewelry that sold 400 times the estimate. So if you have a famous relative, raid the vault or be nice to him just in case...

Chin Yeow plans to do the Manila sweep himself, but there are cases where he heads a team of specialists. At the meeting with the consignor (the person looking to sell), expenses and commissions will be discussed (*see related story*) aside from the appraised value of the goods. The consignor will also be told which auction the pieces can be featured in based on timing, price and period.

Generally, pieces made before 1910 go into a special antique jewelry sale in London. Smaller contemporary pieces would go into the "Fine Jewelry" sale in Amsterdam while the high value lots (some over US$1 million per lot or item) and/or those with prove-

SWEEPING/ F4

Hilove ring Cartier

MODEL Raya Mananquil and young writer Paulo Subido

SOO in love: Ines Delgado and Chukri Prieto

HOT twosome David Jacob and Pinky Webb

WORKAHOLIC socialite Maripi Muscat with her man, Johnny Velasquez

BUSINESSMAN Conkoy Tuason and fashionable wife Doodie Menchaca

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Time for people's fancy to turn to love

CHIC pair Dennis Valdes and Tessa Prieto V.

HE'S a widow, she's a widower! It was chemistry at first sight when businessman Joel Uichico and dedicated cultural and heritage advocate Beatrice Zobel Jr. first met.

POWER couple Patrick Jacinto and Nedy Tantoco

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But wait, haven't times changed? You bet, *palanggas*, they have! Today, love and man come and go faster than..."One day he'll come along, the man I love" as the song goes.

There are two kinds of faithfulness in love: one is based on forever finding new things to love in the person we love. The other is based on our pride in being faithful. *N'est ce pas*? As in, *di bala*?

Slow but sure

They say relationships that grow slowly ultimately have the best chance of survival. Why? Because your brain is in gear before your body shifts into motion.

How do some odd couples work it out? Often, it is the most unlikely alliance that turns out to be the most successful. Take for example this cool, young, high-profile society miss notorious for her outrageous taste in men.

She described how her current love affair begun. She rung him up, persuaded him he wasn't too busy to see her and made the rounds of different hot spots in town. She had the whole thing meticulously planned.

"What happened then?" I asked and she replied, "He asked me what I'd rather have, the whole cake or 20 minutes in bed?" She chose the... ooooops, *moi* ain't saying a word for St. Valentine's sake, *palanggas*.

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Our dashing city gentlemen are considered among the world's sexiest gents, but even the most seductive suitor may eventually fail when something prompts a star-spangled dazzling beauty to pledge allegiance to her hometown boy. Well, that's what makes love so interesting and challenging, don't you think?

Love is on everyone's mind this month of hearts, with Cupid aiming his love arrow at almost all of us. Take a look at the New Romance in its many fascinating forms that even include new hairstyles. A woman's love affair with her hair can be as emotionally charged as her relationship with the man in her life. You can leave him, but your hair is yours forever.

Some beautiful examples of St. Valentine's way of blessing our lovers, as naughty Cupid aims his arrow and hits a bull's eye:

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WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

Five-time lucky

Current sizzling taekwondo expert, movie and television hunk, southern gent **Monsour del Rosario** got hit by Cupid's arrows four times but they fell off! Now St. Valentine seems to have blessed Monsour as he has found the beautiful **Joy Zapanta**, and they will intone "to have and to hold, till death do us part" in June of this year.

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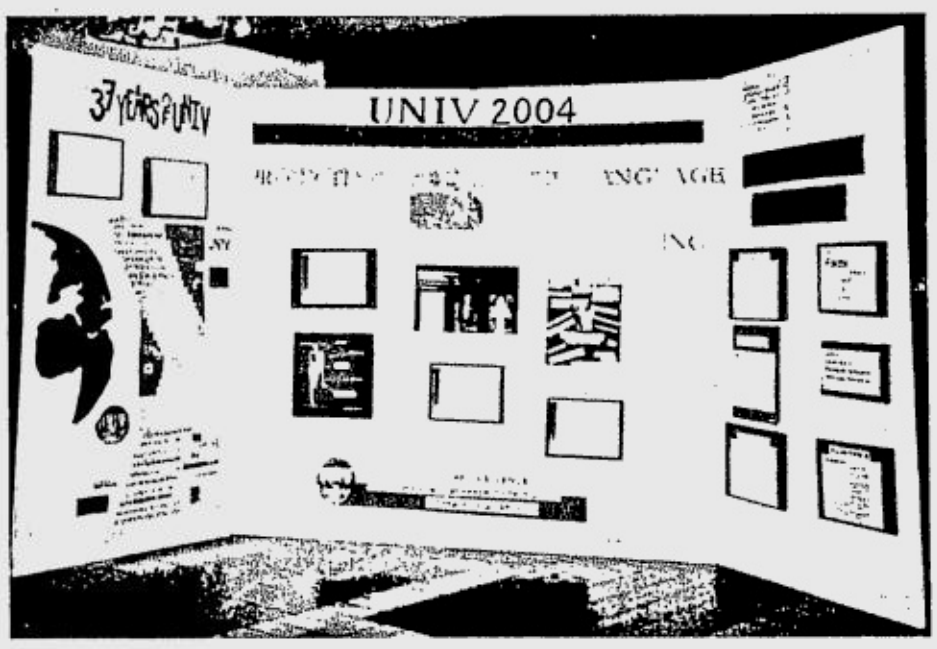
UNIV 2004 audience



UNIV 2004 exhibit

Congress tackles ad language

THE RECENT Univ 2004 National Congress focused on the theme "Projecting Culture: The Language of Advertising." Held at the Tanglaw University Center Auditorium on Examiner Street, West Ave., Quezon City, the congress drew students from different universities who presented research papers on the theme.

Emily Abrera, chief executive officer of McCann-Erickson Philippines, gave the keynote speech. She talked about current television viewing habits of Filipinos, TV's effects on the family, growing child, and individuals.

She asked young people to be discerning and to learn to evaluate what they see on the screen and to let their opinion be known.

A total of 17 studies were presented during the congress. They were written by students from the University of the Philippines (Diliman, Manila and Visayas units), Ateneo de Manila University, University of Asia and the Pacific, De La Salle University, University of the East, University of Cebu, Velez University, and University of Santo Tomas.

Presentors were each given three minutes to talk about their paper.

The papers will be presented in the International Congress in Rome in April.

The Univ Congress was inspired by the basic idea of sanctification of work, a teaching of Opus Dei founder St. Josemaría.

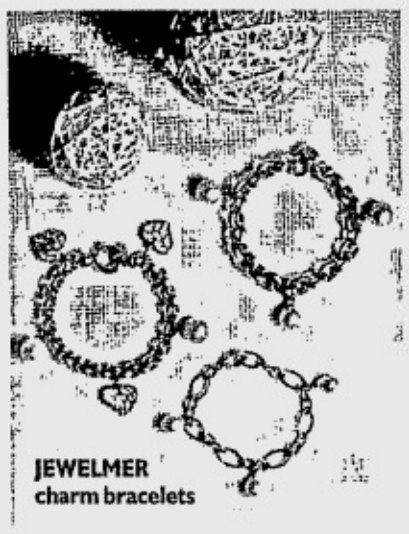
KEYNOTE speaker Emily Abrera

Jewelry house marks 25th year with promo

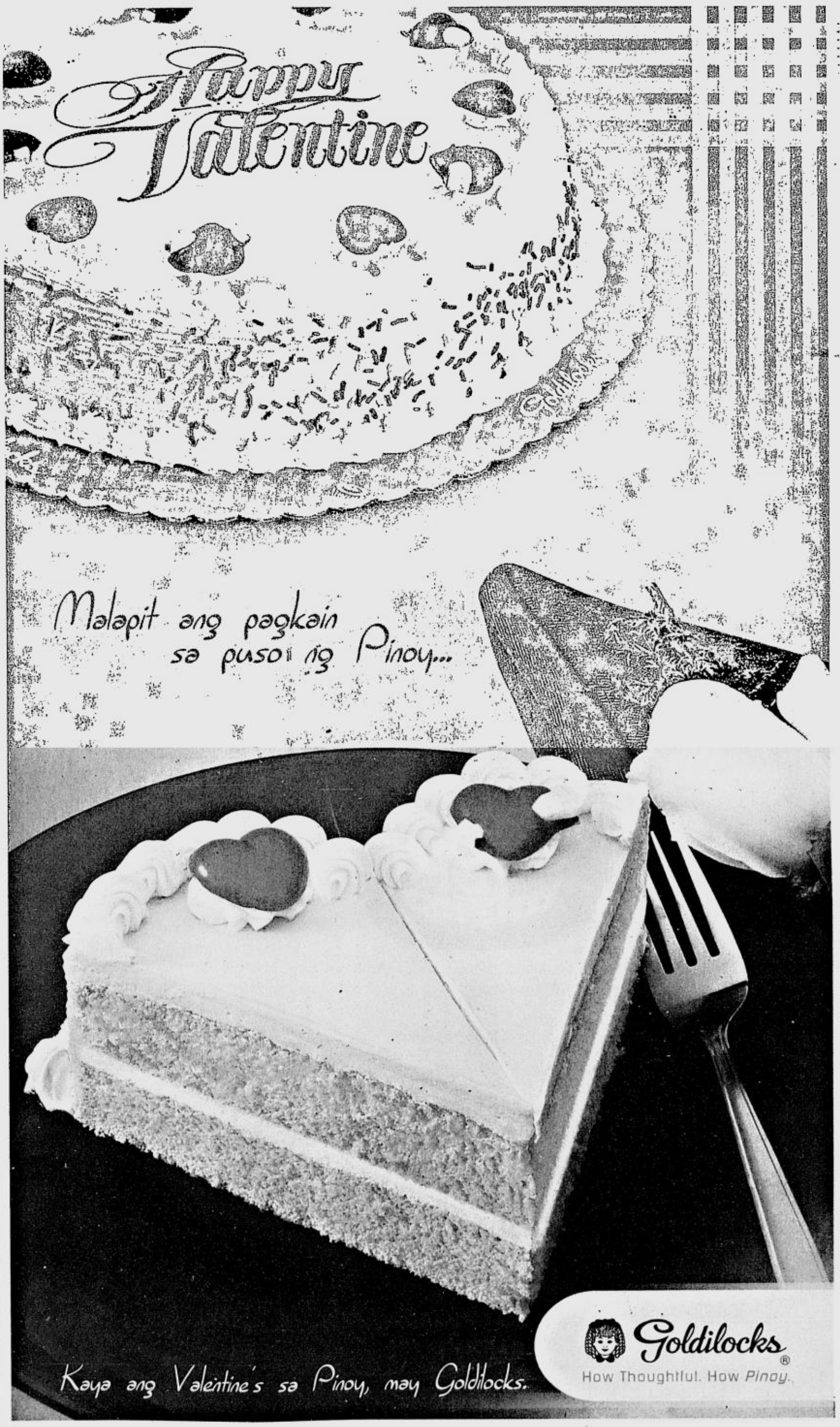
JEWELMER celebrates its 25th year. Every 25th of the month, from February to December, a raffle will be held to choose the winner of luxurious champagne South Sea pearl earrings.

Single receipt purchases of $1,000 will qualify one to the raffle for the pearl earrings. Single receipt purchases below $1,000 entitles one to be one of the three winners of a set of hand-crafted chopsticks with Mother-Of-Pearl inlay.

Call 810-0266, fax 818-9778 or e-mail: sales@jewelmer.com. Visit the Jewelmer showrooms at The Peninsula Hotel, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Glorietta 4, SM Megamall, Alabang Town Center, Head Center and Ayala Center Cebu.



JEWELMER charm bracelets



Sweeping for treasure

From page F1

nance go into the biannual sales such as "Important Jewels" in New York and "Magnificent Jewels" in Hong Kong, St. Moritz and Geneva.

(But if you are, say, the Duchess of Windsor, the Begum Aga Khan, Mona Bismarck, Mrs. Harry Winston, Ava Gardner, Marlene Dietrich or Elton John, you get *your own* sale, catalogue, publicity machine and all.)

The sweep is the time when the consignor must tell the specialist everything he knows about the piece that can add value—sources of stones, placement of signatures (if hard to find), history, limited editions, provenance, etc. If the specialist decides that the piece is worth featuring at any of the sales, further discussion will cover the terms of sale, file and catalogue photography and shipping.

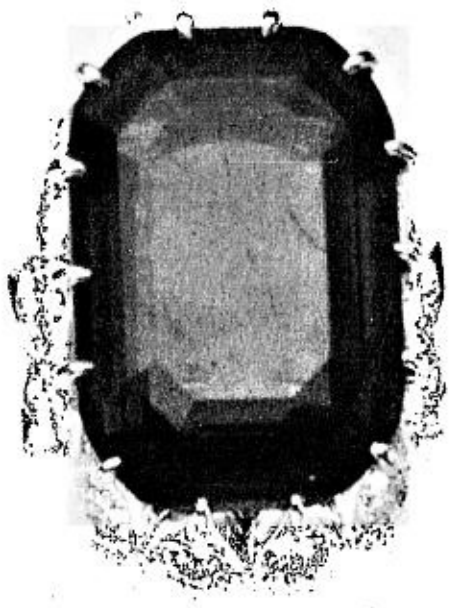
In some cases there may be repairs, cleaning, restringing, replacement of stones or batteries (for watches) or testing. All these expenses will be shouldered by the consignor, and Sotheby's can send them to international gemology labs on behalf of the consignor.

The recognized labs for grading and quality appraisal are: GIA for diamonds, Gubelin for colored stones or Type IIA diamonds (of superior quality with very little nitrogen).

For what it's worth

To appraise your piece, jewelry specialists go by several key indicators. One is the intrinsic value of the piece, that is, what the stones and metal would be worth based on rarity, size and quality.

Another may be the period and/or signature. Of such pieces, Chin Yeow says, "Naturally a signed period piece will be valued higher than an unsigned piece. Signed pieces tend to have better workmanship. However, you can come upon a beautiful unsigned piece, and collectors will appreciate the workmanship and rarity and it will find its market value at auction."



WALLIS Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor, was photographed by Cecil Beaton wearing her 19.77 carat Columbian emerald engagement ring by Cartier (shown in color at right). The Duchess of Windsor sale was a display of some of the best gems in the world and by far the biggest single-owner jewelry sale at US$50 million.

Past prices for similar goods and current market trends add to the assessment of any merchandise.

One jewelry specialist told me that since prices at auctions are also determined by market demands and trends, an astute seller will consign goods at a time he thinks his pieces are in fashion. Likewise, an astute buyer would buy at low market prices before a trend hits.

Take, for example, the collection of socialite and philanthropist Janice Levin which were mostly iconic designs from the '70s and '80s. For decades, gem-studded '80s and hard-edged '70s pieces were not popular. However, Sotheby's successfully sold the entire collection in April 2002 just as collectors were warming up to the vintage designer trend.

Trends vary based on location, therefore sales are organized to suit the individual cities they are held in. Hong Kong collectors are looking for flawless stones in all categories with a growing interest in strong-colored fancy diamonds, particularly of the pink and blue variety.

Jadeite is sold only in Hong Kong, while rubies (including star rubies), signed and/or period pieces and the rare gem alexandrite are popular worldwide.

To sell or not to sell

Before the sale, specialist and consignor will arrive at a reserve price, which is defined as "a previously agreed value at which the auctioneer will not sell the piece." This, of course, should not be lower than the low estimate. The reserve price is a confidential number even to the auction house staff.

Technically, a piece is not sold without a reserve price, but there are cases when items are sold under "no reserve" (clearly marked on the catalogue with an auction hammer icon) at the discretion of the consignor. Unsold goods can be returned to consignors, or offered at later sales at lower prices or at alternative sales in other cities.

Contrary to what many may think that auctions are merely for the very wealthy or for those who were once wealthy, they are transparent market places that have existed for centuries where budding collectors can learn from consulting specialists and start any collection with inexpensive purchases.

It is also for seasoned collectors to unload a collection to make way for newer and more important pieces. Market watchers can also assess mentally what their collections are worth. And if you don't like what you bought, you can always sell it again... at auction.

To make appointments for sweeps, contact the Sotheby's Philippine representative office at tel. (632) 8848241; fax (632)8848242 or e-mail kim.camacho@sothebys.com.

E-mail the author at kittygo_pdi@yahoo.com.

Consignor expenses

IF you are selling goods through auction, you can expect a worldwide captive audience of serious collectors and dealers, international publicity and traveling exhibits.

However, expect the following expenses for those services:

1) Seller premium to be paid to Sotheby's by consignor:

Goods sold for under HK$ 30,000—15% of sale price

Goods sold over HK$ 30,000—10% of sale price

2) Insurance 1.5% of sale price if sold or 1.5% of estimate if unsold

3) Illustration—HK$ 2,000-5,000 depending on position in catalogue and value of piece

4) Shipping—US$ 100-150 per piece

5) Other expenses: battery or stone replacement, restringing, testing

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LIFESTYLE

THERE'S never a dull moment in the life of retiree Anita Tiongson when she's with her favorite cacti.

A retiree's Eden

Garden retreat energizes a 77-year-old, who has had a heart bypass

Text by Tita V. Giron
Photos by Johnny Villena

ANITA A. Tiongson's cactus greenhouse is more than just a collection of plants from all over the world. It reflects her passion for gardening, evidently the secret that makes her look younger than a 77-year-old retiree who had had a heart bypass.

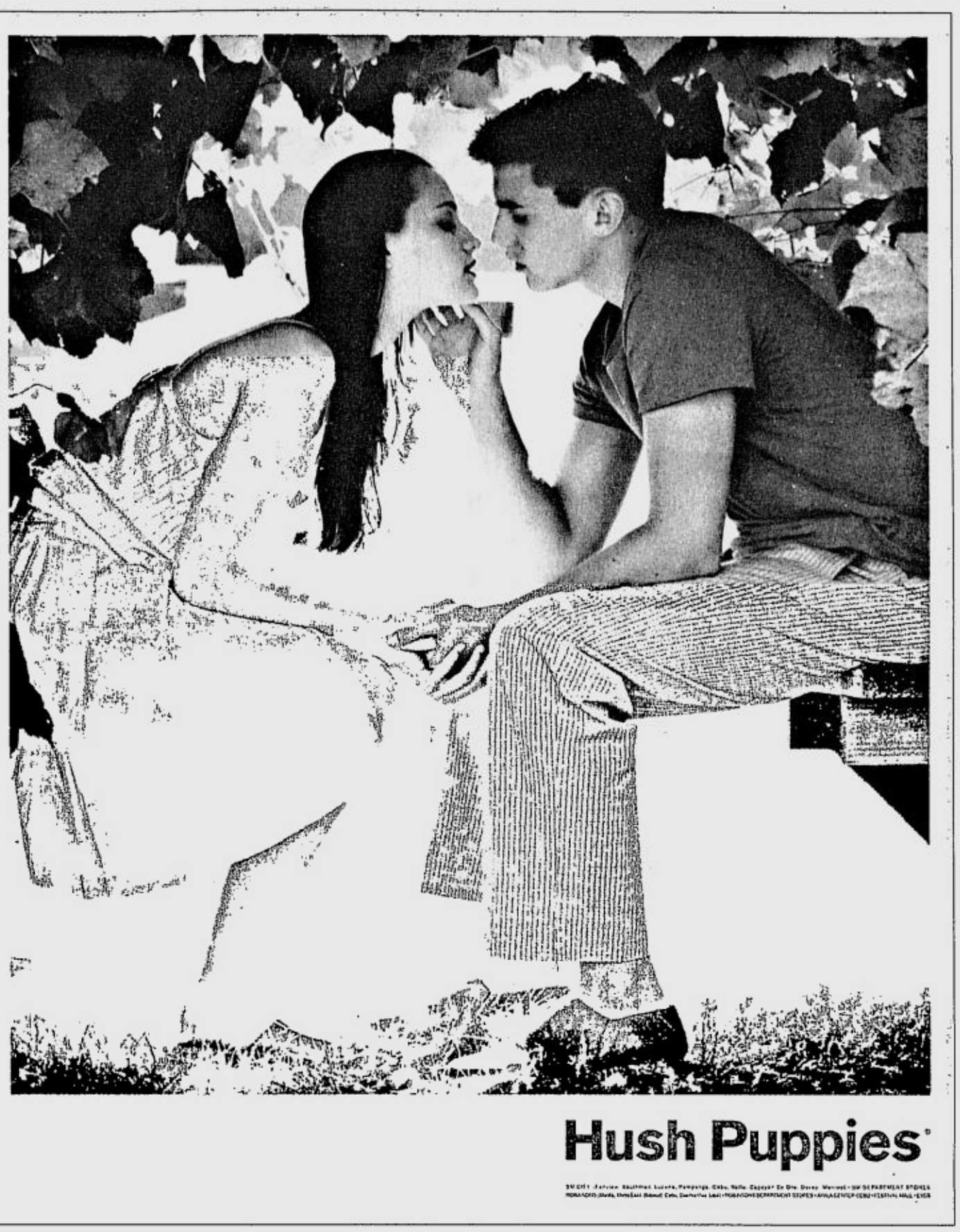
"*Inang*," as she is fondly called, cultivates a garden retreat on over 1,000 sq m of fertile land in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Her hobby, developed over the years, started with plants she used to get from her mother's garden.

"I have been gardening since the 1950s and never a day have I ever been bored," she said as she showed her cacti collection in a spic-and-span greenhouse. Outside the plant house, the sun-loving desert cacti pachypodium, crassula and yucca stand proud and tall in the sunny cactus section of the big garden. Her favorite plants are cacti and succulents, of which she has about 200 different varieties from all over the world.

But the cactus collection is just a fraction of the wide assortment of ornamental plants and fruit trees in the lush garden. She cultivates each of them personally from cacti and bromeliads to every imaginable garden plants.

There are aglaonemas, anthuriums, palms, ferns, cycads, lipstick vines, hoyas, begonias, African violets. They grow harmoniously with tall fruiting trees, among

A RETIREE'S/ G2



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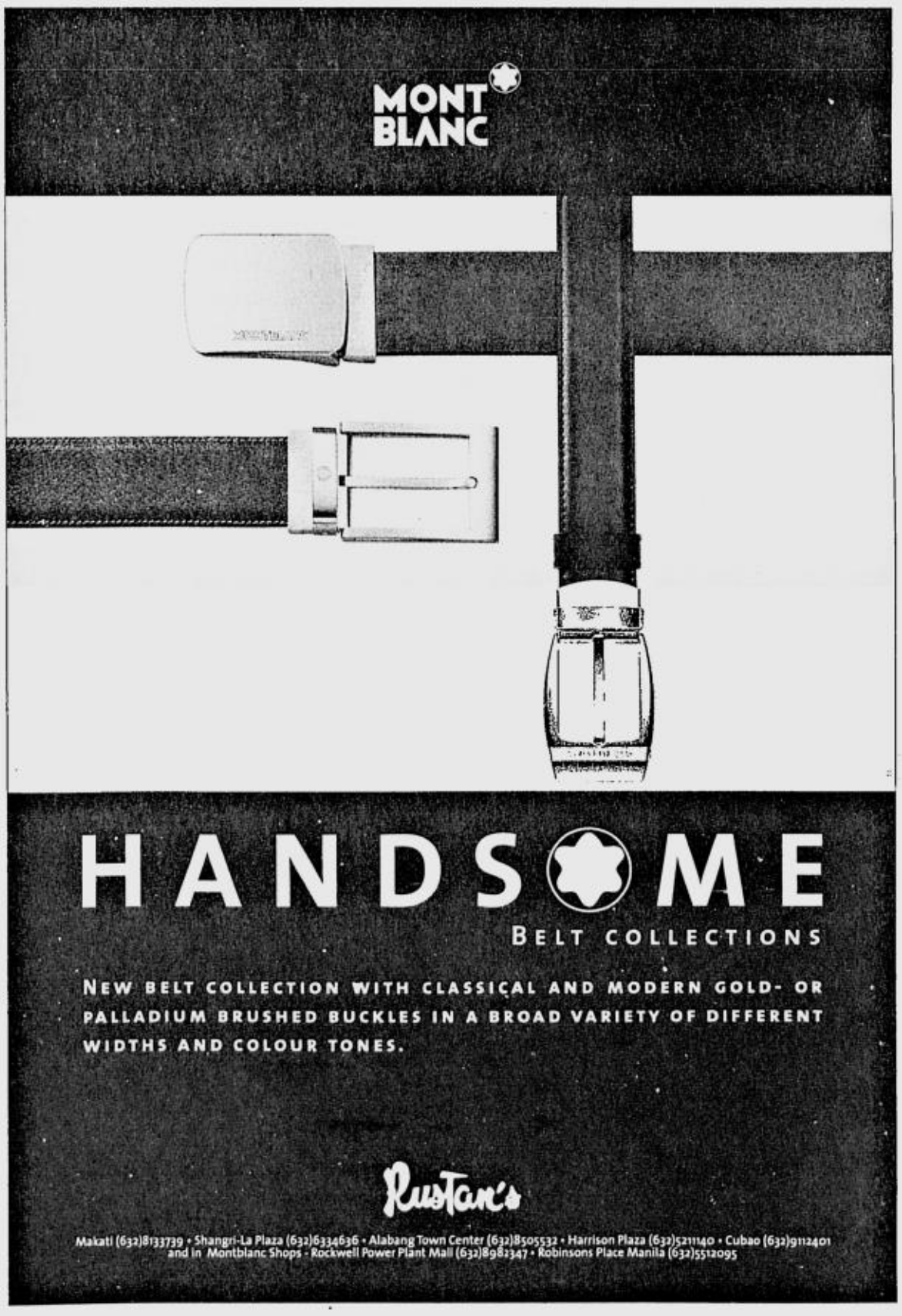

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From page G1

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Anyone visiting Inang as she putters around the garden can see that her hobby keeps her up and about. "Inang is always in her garden no matter what time it is," confirmed her three daughters Rozale Tizon, Aida Mejia and Gloria de Guzman, who are garden aficionados in their own right. Other gardeners in the family are Aida's husband Bebot and cousin Ponciano Hernandez, who share with Inang a fondness for aglaonema and dieffenbachia.

Putting garden in order

"She's even more excited now with her garden since she hired a landscaper," a daughter said. The retiree got young landscape artist Lorenz Inos Jr. to put order in the garden that had become overcrowded with the assemblage of plants acquired over the years.

Inos was faced with a serious challenge of putting the myriad assortment of plants in good order. "She has so many plants with different light and water requirements. They had to be regrouped and relocated, and we had to bring over garden accessories and complements to give her garden a new look," the landscaper disclosed.

Inos Jr., who took over the landscaping business started by father Lorenzo Inos Sr. in the 1980s, is well known for his soft-landscape style and designs inspired by nature. The family business includes a garden center in Talavera and a plant production nursery in Cabanatuan. Another Inos son, the agriculturist Janjan, is in charge of transporting materials needed for landscaping projects. For Inang's garden, he had to source out natural rocks, driftwood, weathered railroad ties (*traviezas*).

Living garden

Eye-catching bromeliads draw attention to two natural-looking ponds, one at the front garden, and another one at the back. Around the ornamental pool are big rocks in different geometric shapes softened by the variety of bromeliads and ornamental plantings. Adding more exotic touches to the landscape are tall yuccas and cycads which, according to

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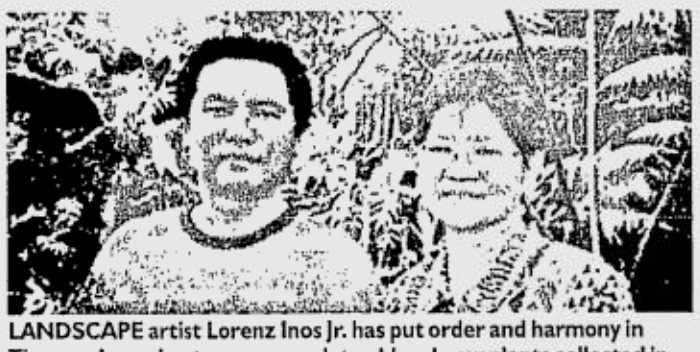

LANDSCAPE artist Lorenz Inos Jr. has put order and harmony in Tiongson's garden to accommodate old and new plants collected in almost 50 years.

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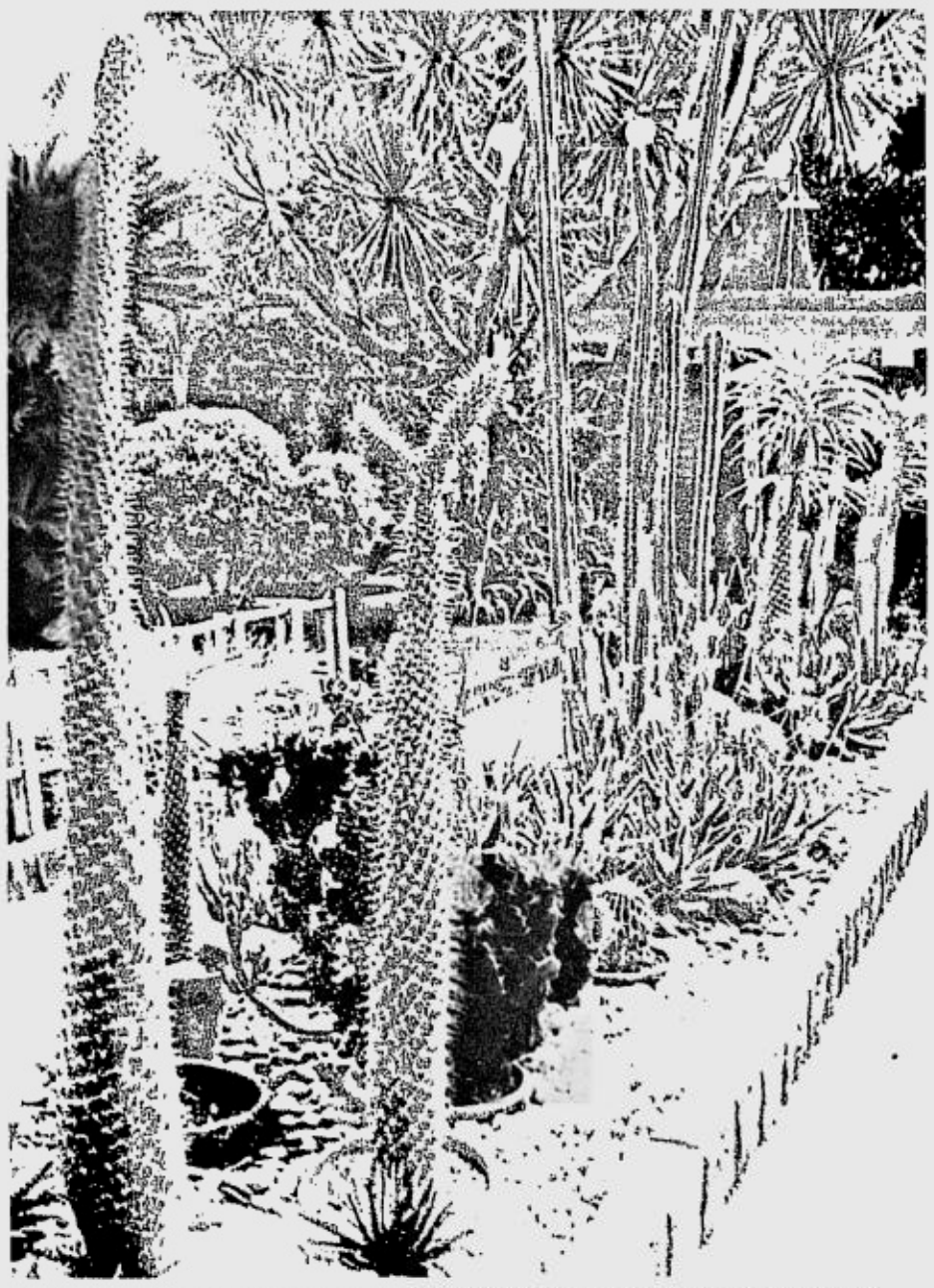

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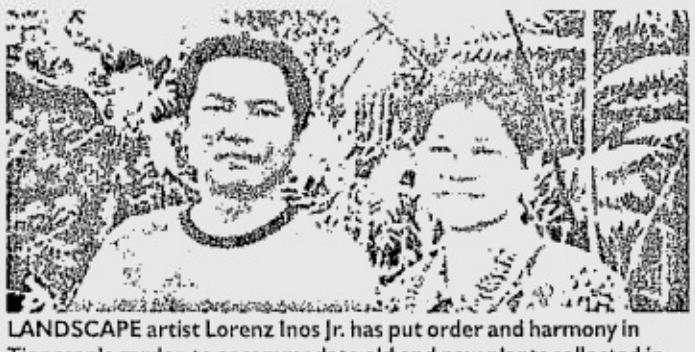

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children's hour

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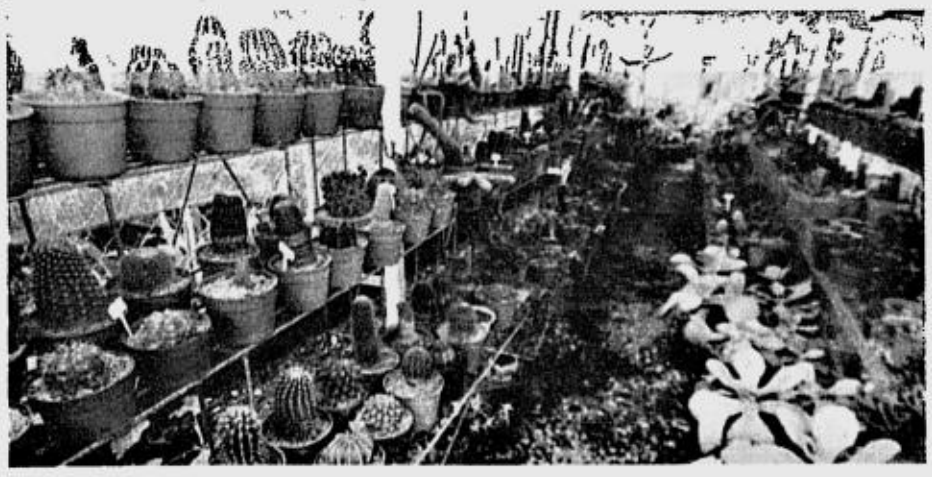


TIONGSON propagates her cacti and succulents in a specially built greenhouse.

NT acquisitions fill every nook and cranny of the spacious garden.

TUS blooms profusely in the desert box garden.

Inang, are at least 30 years old. Altogether, the effect is an inviting atmosphere that attracts visitors to the ponds.

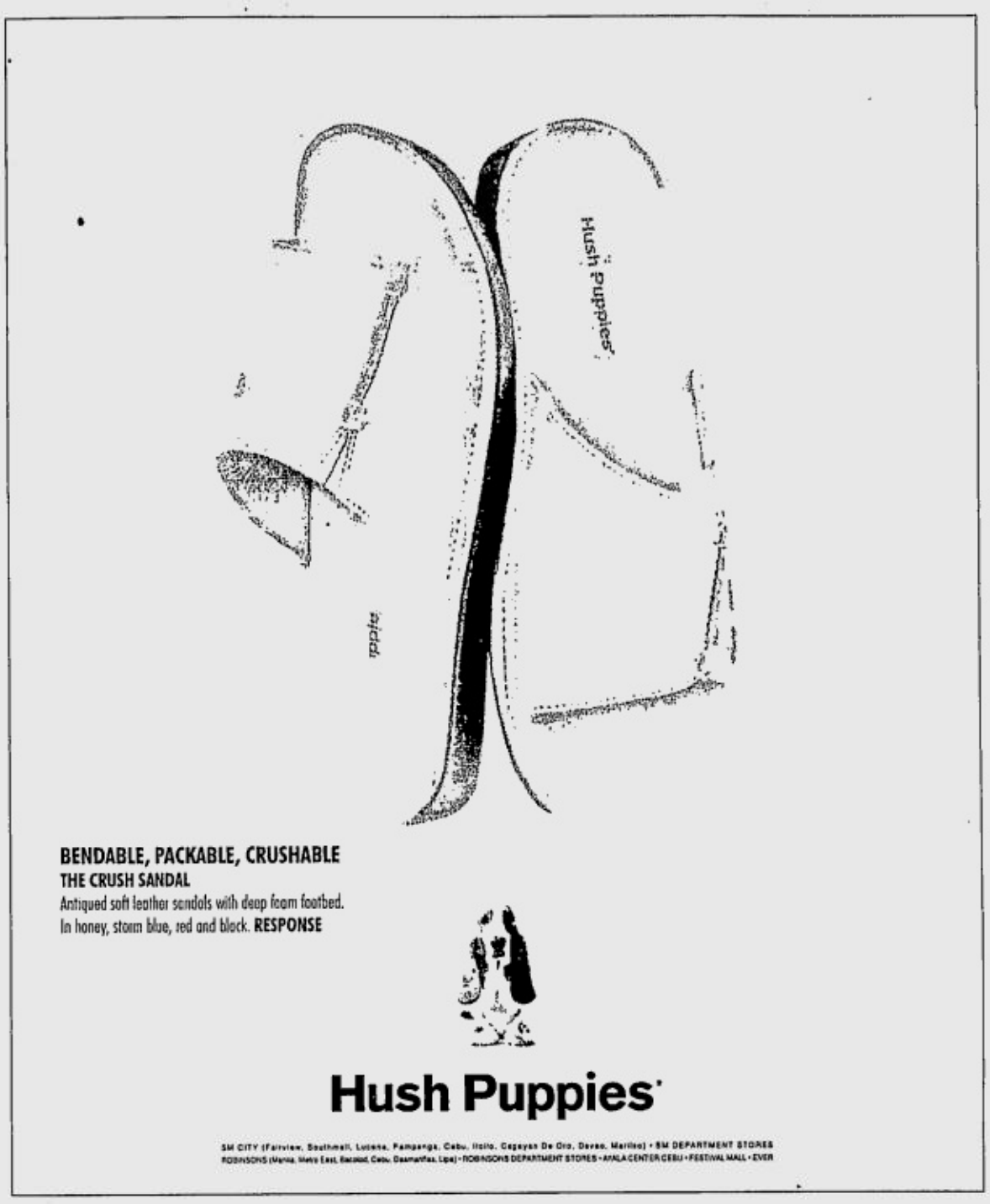
Visitors get the overall impression that the garden is teeming with life. Inos Jr. attributes this to the colorful assemblage of bromeliads among the foliage ornamentals and the water features in the garden. "The waterfall gives movement and sound to the place while the swaying trees and their rustling leaves complement the lively atmosphere," the landscaper explained.

"The result of the major overhaul was well-worth it," Inang and her daughters enthused. The 50-year-old begonias and new hybrids share a table under the shade of a fruit tree. Staghorn ferns are on the trunks of tall trees. The 30-year-old ponytails are mounted on sturdy terra cotta pots. Alambrillo ferns, an old garden favorite, have been put on a raised plant shelf. Repotted anthurium, aglaonema, and dieffenbachia have been put in front to "greet" guests and are now showcase specimens.

Visitors are invariably drawn to the colorful bromeliads. Boy Fernandez, the basketball player, was reportedly so impressed by the bromeliads and the landscape that he couldn't help but ask Inos Jr. how to maintain such a garden. The Tiongsons hosted recently a garden lunch for the visiting Purefoods basketball team.

Inang Tiongson's garden is an inspiring example of a paradise for people who are ready for retirement. Interested folks can inquire from landscaper Lorenz Inos at 0918-5103412 or from agriculturist Janjan Inos at 0919-2001832.

EYE-CATCHING lipstick vine on a hanging planter diverts attention from the unsightly tool shed.



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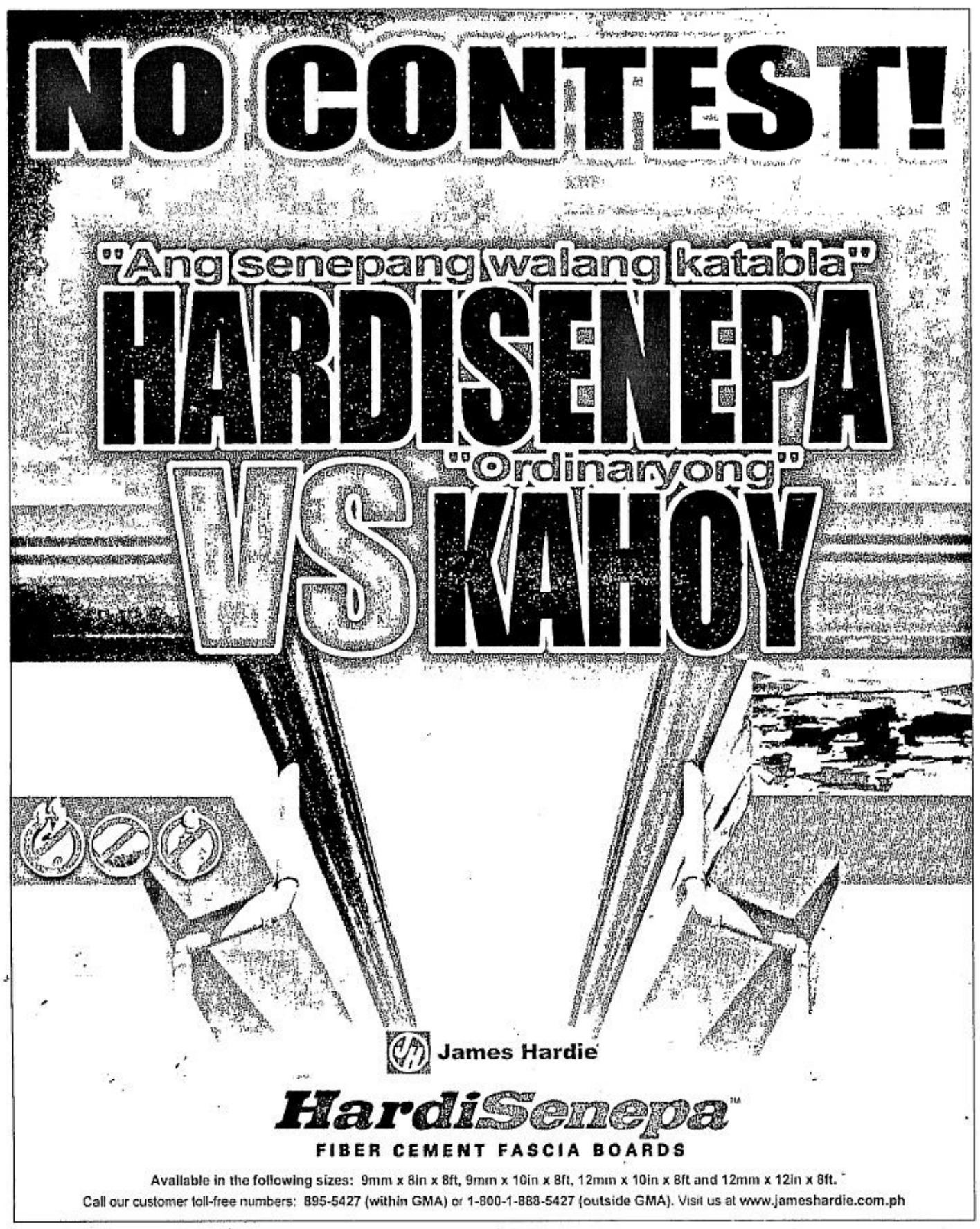

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CELEBRATE Valentine's Day by sending your loved ones the most beautiful floral arrangements from The Flower Farm, the country's top flower grower and retailer.

Blooms from Europe and Ecuador highlight this season's offerings.

The "Ruby Sparkle" is an elegant arrangement of 10 ruby red tulips from Europe in a slender, gold leaf vase. Gracefully arranged with select foliage, these tulips stand out from other arrangements in its simple yet stunning combination of red, green and golden hues.

ROSE GARDEN BOUQUET. Glorious hues of the sun make this arrangement of a dozen long-stemmed roses from Ecuador a choice pick.

The classic rose gets a fresh interpretation with the "Rose Garden Bouquet," a dozen long-stemmed roses from Ecuador in glorious shades of the sun. Carefully bundled in a delicate wrap and a satin ribbon, these roses are a tender and lasting expression of love to your recipient.

"Spring" is a delightful floral arrangement bursting with color. Gerberas, spray mums, godetias and trachelium are expertly arranged in a terra cotta pot.

The Flower Farm also offers "Fruity Love" packs, which combine fruits such as fresh apples, grapes and oranges and brightly colored spring flowers in a lovely wicker basket.

Also available in hues of red, the season's color of choice, are cherry-colored godetias, bold and expressive stargazer lilies, and long-stemmed crimson roses from Ecuador, arranged in either a bouquet wrap, glass or gold leaf vases.

Visit or call any of The Flower Farm shops in Rada St,. Legaspi Village, Makati (8156665/67/68); Alabang Town Center (8094612 or 09) Ashcreek Center, Madison, San Juan (7227122 or 44) and Glorietta 4 (7527206).

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A ROOM WITH A VIEW. Multifunction furniture, such as a sofa bed, maximises space.

A bit of New York in Mandaluyong

Soho Central is the first residential building in the Edsa Central complex

MASTER BAKING SCHOOL
By: Professor Maria Cezar
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Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

A LUXURIOUS, 24-hectare sprawl amid lush environs with trendy shops, restaurants, bars and cafés will soon be developed at the Edsa Central, corner Edsa and Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City.

In the heart of this ultra modern community will rise the two-tower, 35-story Soho Central, named after New York's hippest neighborhood. For this vibrant community—a joint venture of Greenfield Development Corp. and Meredien Development Group, exclusively marketed by Century Communities Corp.—entertainment, fashion and arts will be just a heartbeat away.

Ready to meet the demands of 21st-century urban living and keen on striking a balance between work and leisure, the Soho Central concept makes everything and anything within comfortable reach—and that includes transportation.

"The trend today in contemporary residential buildings is work- and transportation-oriented development," says Century Properties Inc.'s (CPI) young managing director John Victor R. Antonio. CPI is one of the companies behind one of the country's high-end residential buildings, Essensa East Forbes at The Fort.

Indeed, the Soho Central is planned, designed and developed with urban realities in mind.

Easy access

A walkway will directly connect residents to the Shangri-La Mall and Edsa MRT station, much like the way New York buildings are connected to the subway and shopping arcades. The MRT, Antonio says, will be the preferred transport of young executives to avoid heavy traffic and the risk of being late for important meetings.

Everything will be within walking distance—whether residents want to shop, eat or work. Accessibility and connectivity are the keywords.

Soho Central alone will feature four levels of retail and commercial es

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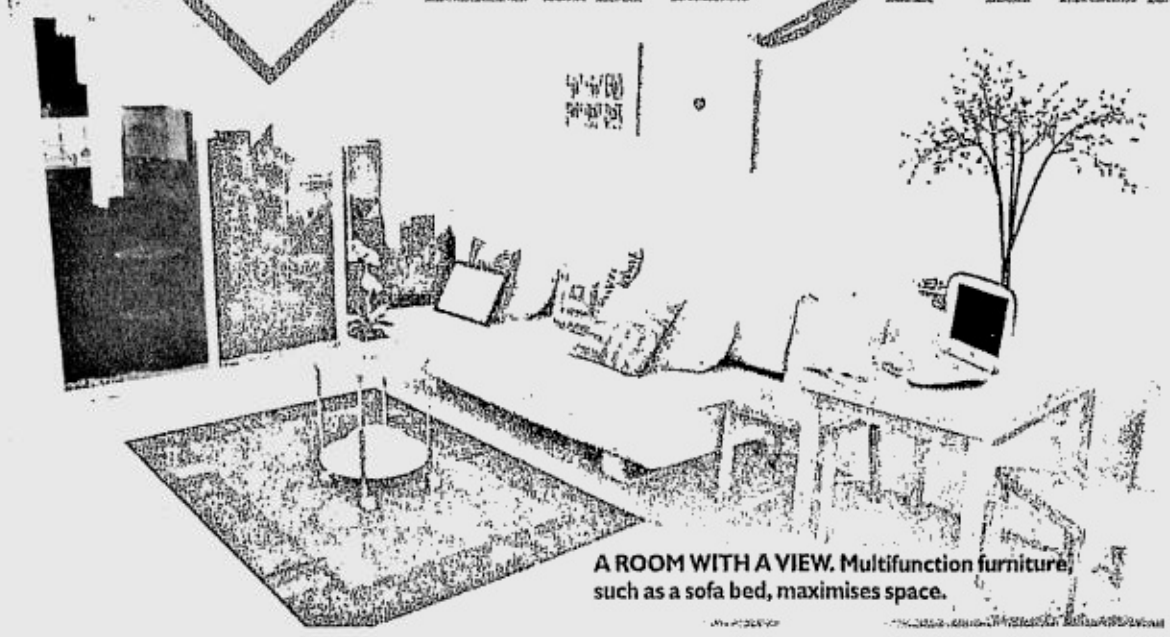

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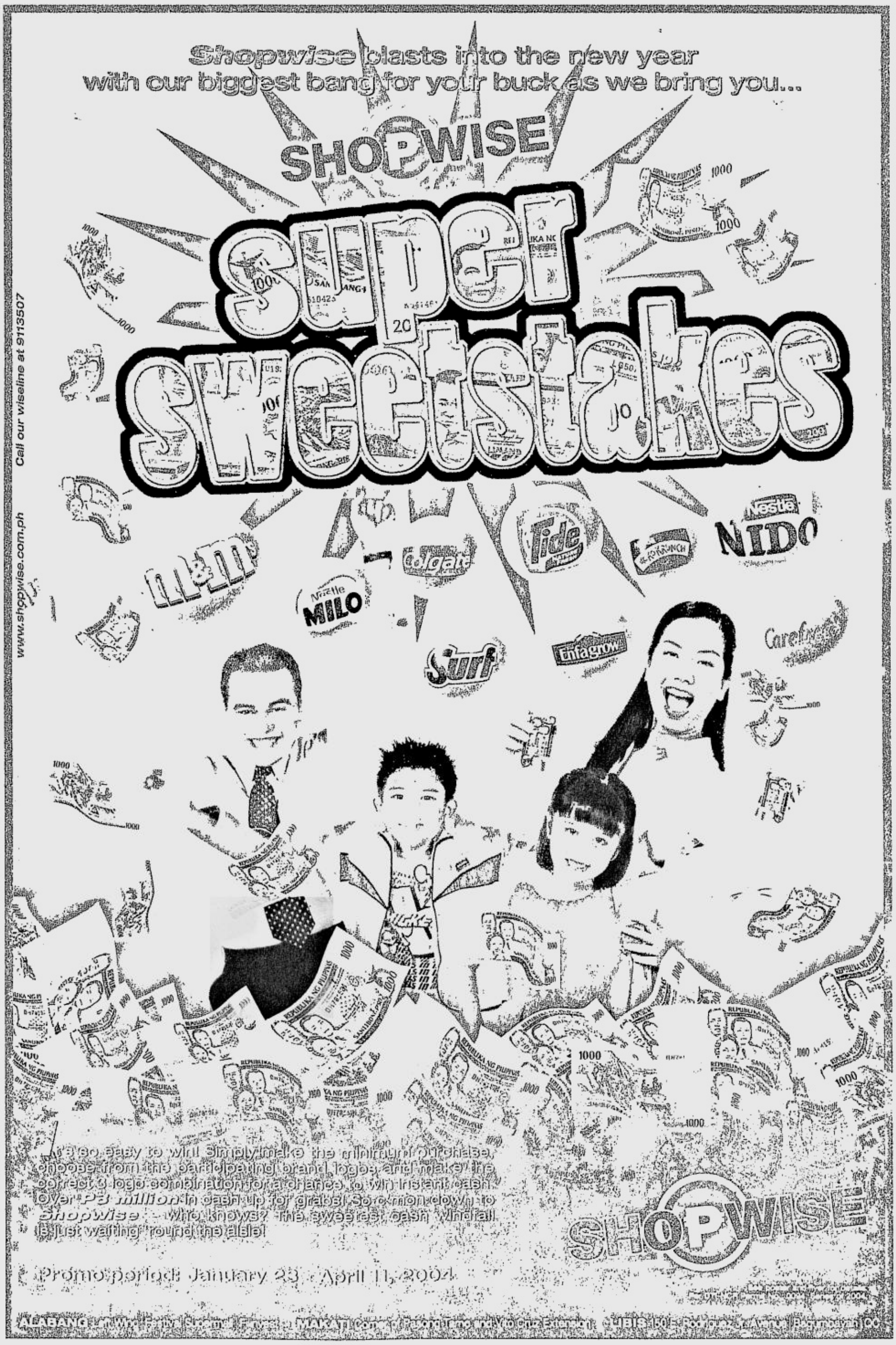

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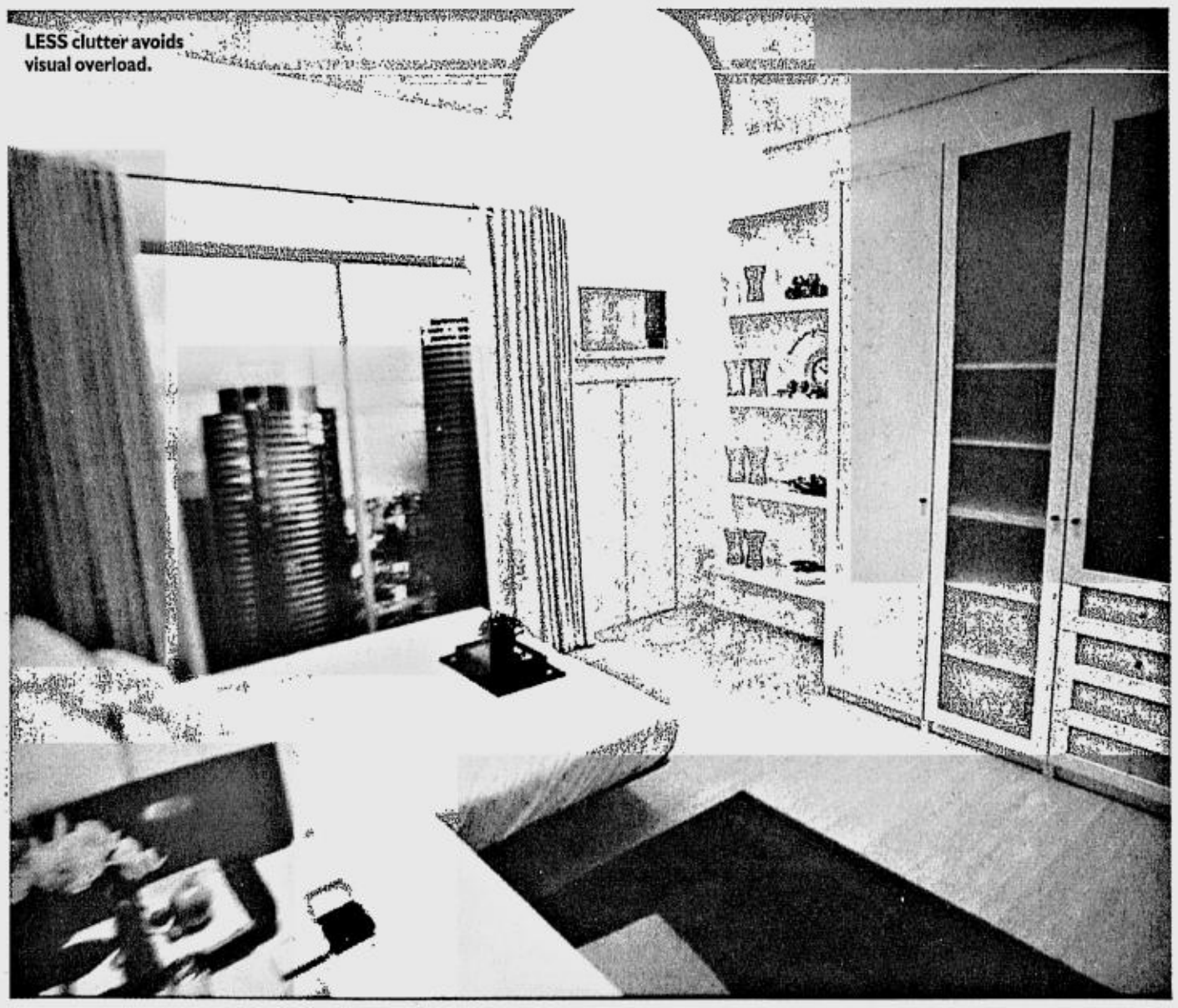
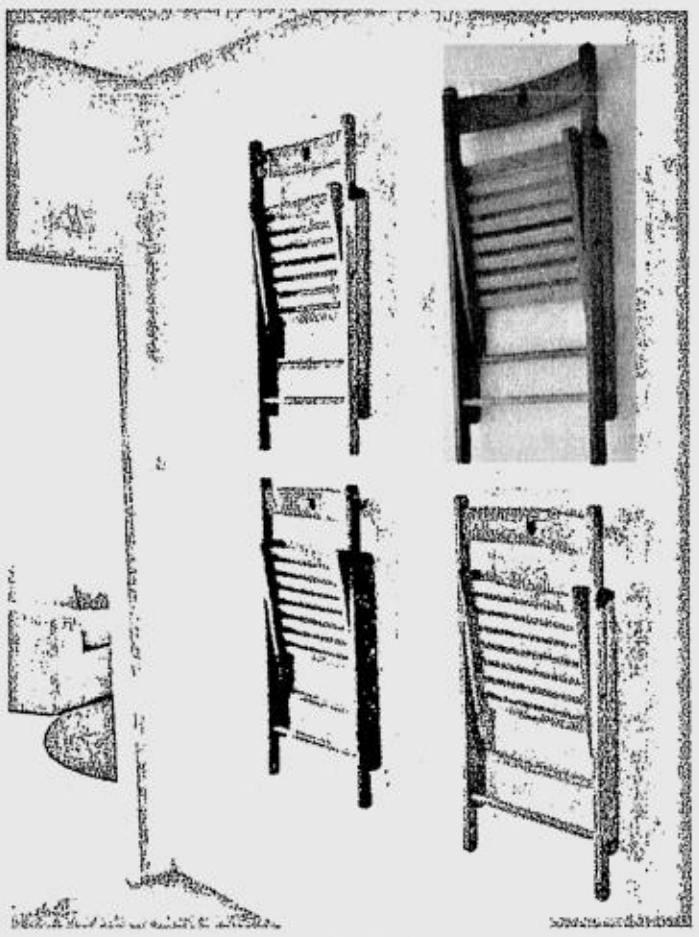


LESS clutter avoids visual overload.



CREATIVE storage makes use of vertical spaces.

LUXURIOUS living at affordable prices

A bit of New York in Mandaluyong

From page H1

tablishments and basement parking slots, with amenities such as first-class health, spa and gym facilities, lap pool, landscaped Zen garden and meditation area, laundry and dry cleaning services, function rooms and business center, and residents' lounge. The building is near schools, churches and the hospital, Medical City.

This is luxury living at reasonable prices. For as low as P8,000 a month, it can be anyone's dream home. Available are studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units at 30, 40 and 60 sq m, with floor-to-ceiling panoramic windows.

All units in Soho will have balconies. "We feel it is important," says Antonio. "Condo living, as some people would say, is tighter than normal. The balcony is a way for our residents to connect with the outside world, to get fresh air and see greenery."

Quality life

But are Filipinos ready to give up their lawns and homey quarters for 30- to 60-sq-m space?

Space is at a premium in the city, and Antonio says people can readily adapt to this new trend. Besides, he adds, the alternatives are not that appealing. He says a house in the suburbs often mean distressing hours stuck in traffic every single day.

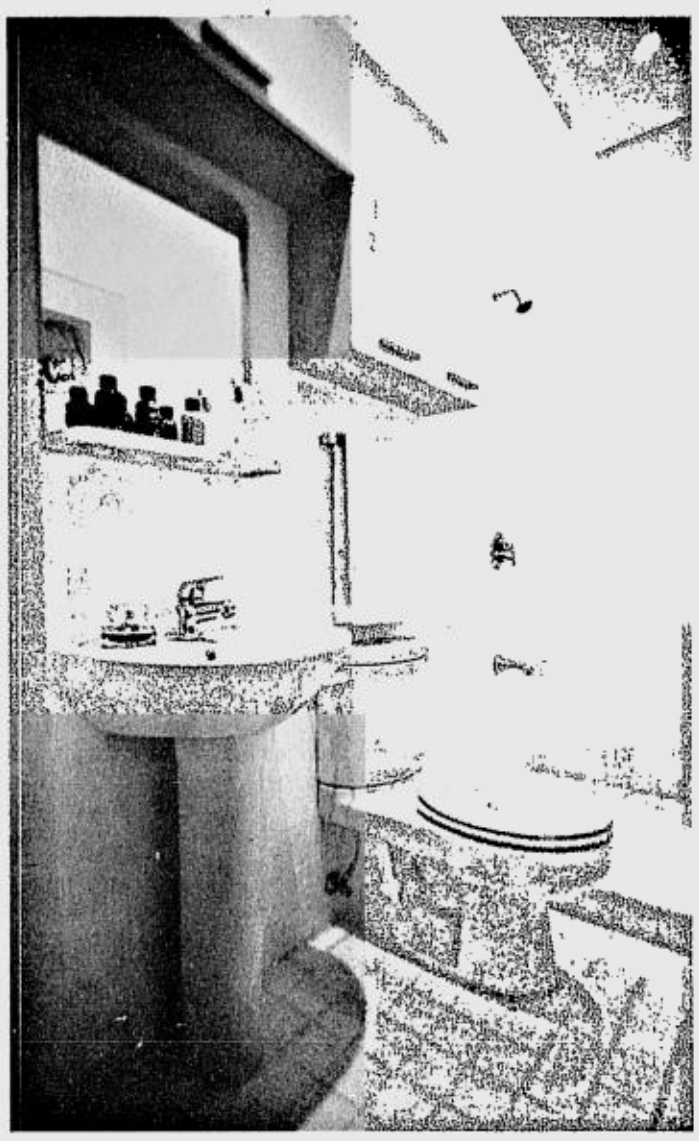
Designs are flexible, Antonio says. Buyers can, say, get two studio units and have the wall between them removed.

But even a small unit does not have to look cramped, as Soho's model units' interior designer Ricardo Cuerva Jr. proves. Antonio says Cuerva used light colors and mobile and multifunction furniture pieces to give an illusion of space.

"The idea is to make use of vertical spaces since you have a limited horizontal space," Antonio says. For instance, folding chairs hang on one side of the wall to reduce clutter and make the limited space larger than what it really is. By going minimalist, there is less visual overload.

Soho Central model units are available for viewing. Call 8307610 or 8183361 local 125.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph



BATHROOM fixtures are already installed.

ALL units come with kitchen cabinetry.

Décor and accessories sale

PLAY & Display will hold a Red Sale Go promo until Feb. 29. You can get various accessories like cotton beddings, glassware, ceiling lamps, throws, as well as furniture such as Italian sofas, Swiss Beds and Wardrobes at half their regular prices.

Special discounts will be given to sofa beds, framed and beveled mirrors, entertainment cabinets, dining chairs, dining tables, center tables, side tables and a lot more. Avail also of reduced prices of ceramics, porcelain, candles, lamps, carpets and oriental beddings.

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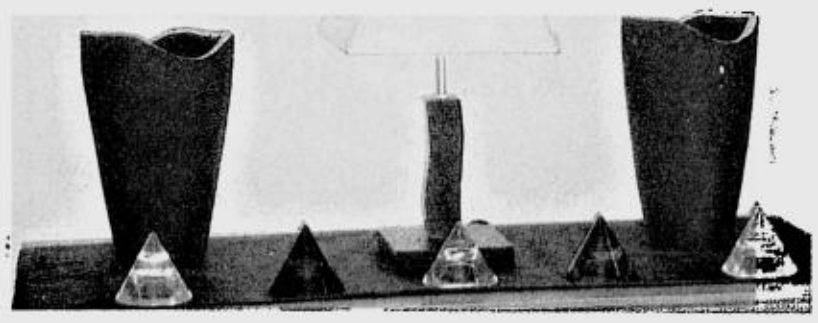
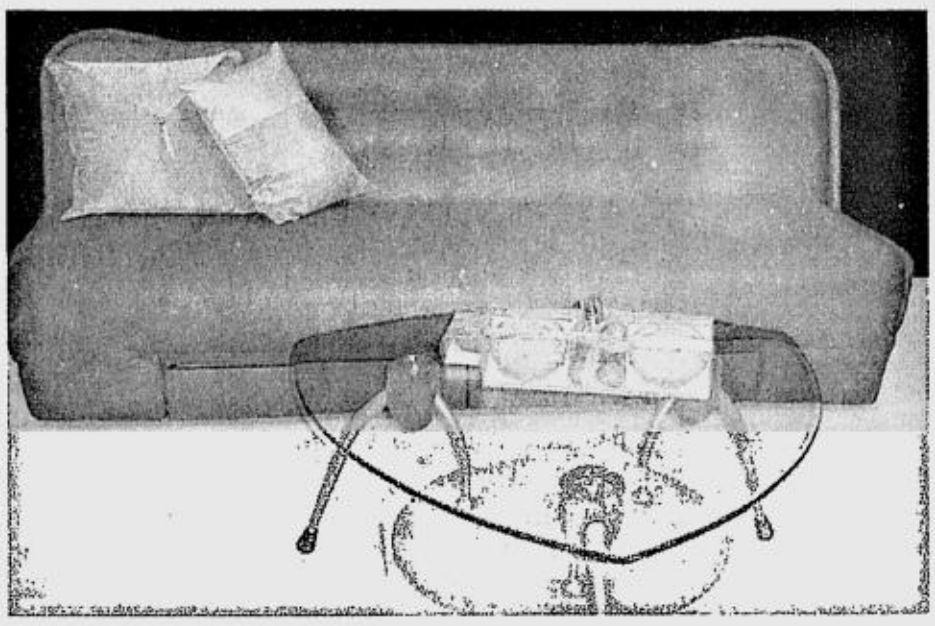
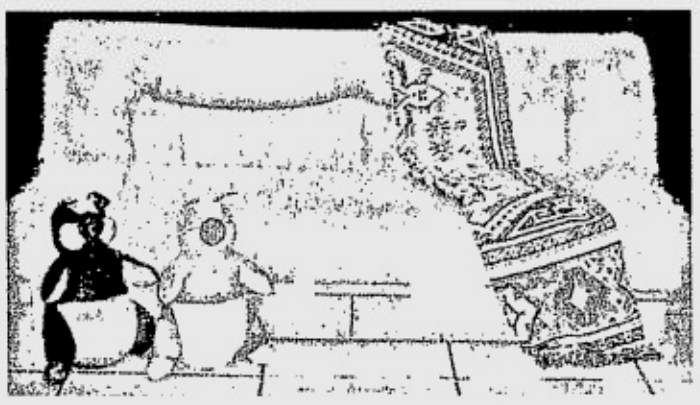


A MIRROR can serve as an interesting wall accent as well as create the illusion of space. Get this and other designs at 30-percent discount at Play & Display.

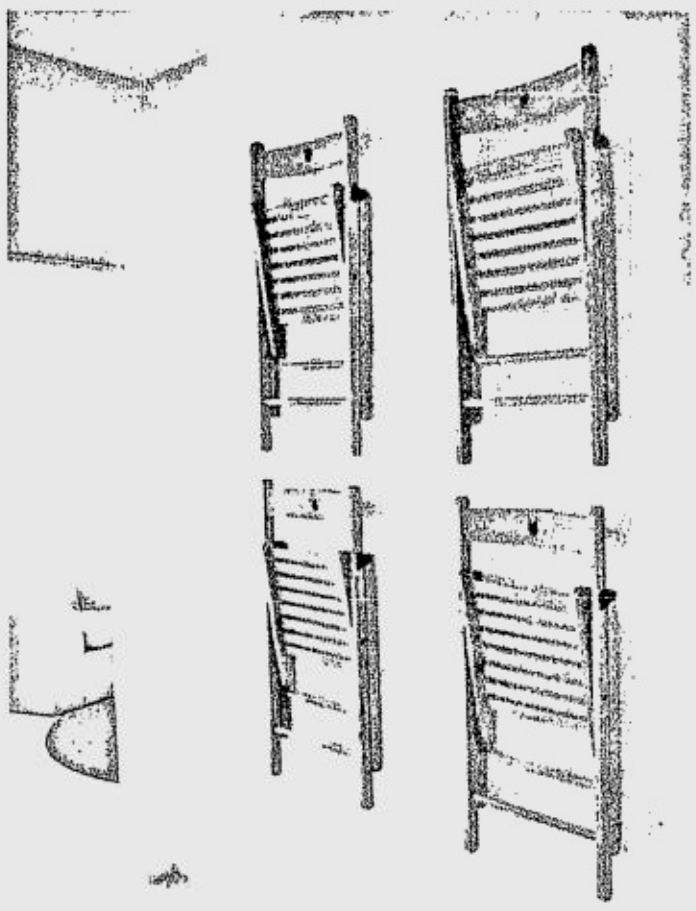


RED Poppy Seed, a sofa and bed in one practical yet stylish furniture piece



SCOTCH sofa bed, in luscious yellow, has a unique design and drawers for extra storage.

LESS clutter avoids visual overload.



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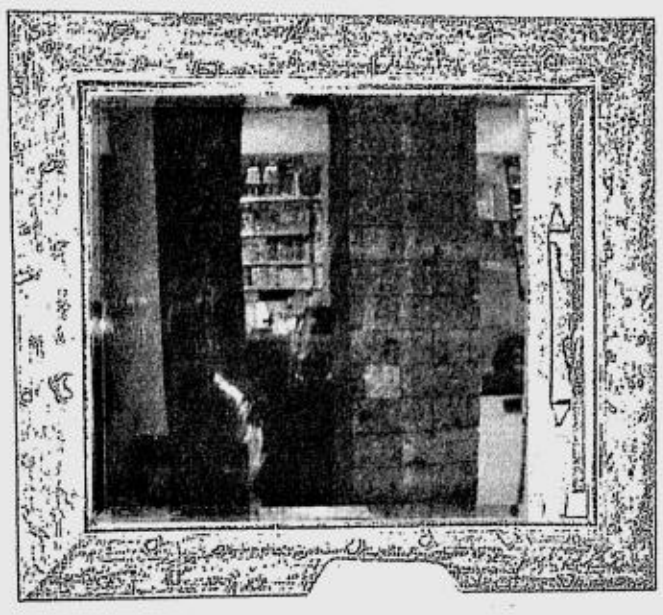

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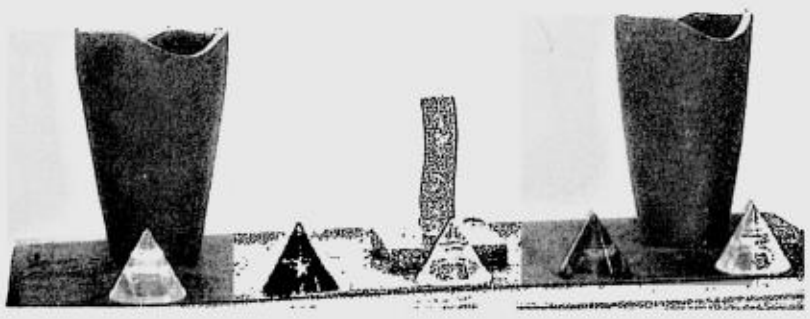

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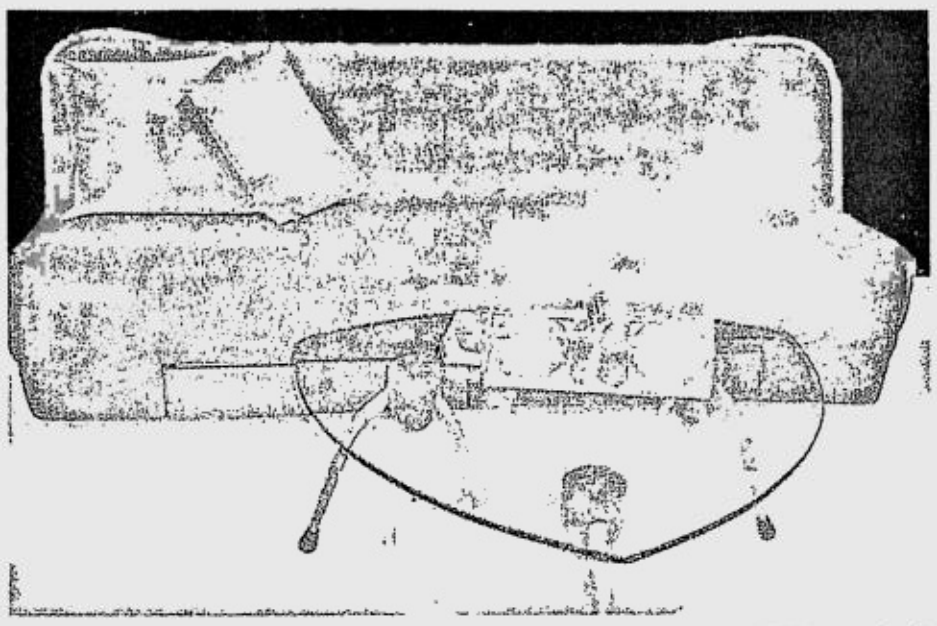

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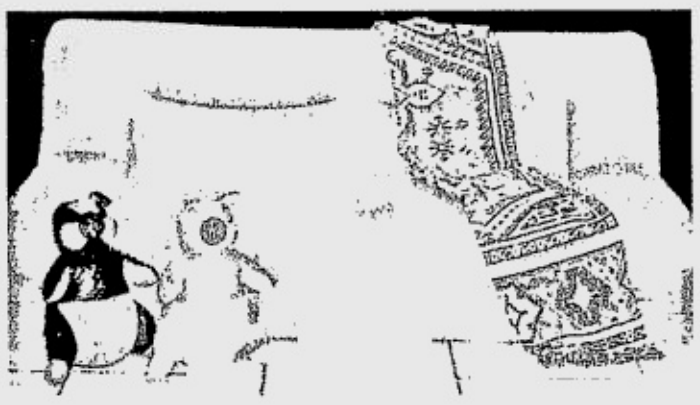

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IBP and Katipunan community create new environmental groups

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

IN THE MIDST of so much disheartening news about the way our environment is being abused and disregarded, come reports that two new action groups have been especially created to address those problems. The Office of the Environmental Ombudsman (OEO), the first of its kind, resulted from a landmark meeting on Feb. 3 between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP). Named first environmental ombudsman is Gilbert L. Candelaria, director of the Public Assistance Corruption Prevention Office (PACPO).

It will be recalled that last September, the IBP set up an Environmental Law Committee within its ranks with lawyer Antonio Oposa as chair. The committee organized an IBP National Action Team to handle citizens' complaints.

The OEO was created so ordinary citizens would know where to report environmental violations. The agreement to set up the OEO was signed by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo and IBP president Jose Anselmo Cadiz. It was witnessed by Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Elisea Gozun.

With the OEO in place, the IBP can bring complaints to the office or officials concerned. If the officials do not act on the complaints, the IBP endorses the case to the environmental ombudsman. The OEO may be reached via the Ombudsman's office, tel. 9269032 local 464 (director Evelyn Balipon's office) or through IBP's national office (tel. 6311158) or its 87 chapters nationwide.

If even lawyers find it necessary to act on environmental violations, the problem must be deeper and more rampant than we think.

Technical Working Group

The second organization created to help save the environment is the Technical Working Group (TWG), whose initial task is to study traffic along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. The avenue has become controversial in the face of the insistence of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to cut down trees along its service road and center islands to ease traffic congestion.

The Katipunan community—residents, officials and students of educational institutions along that avenue, as well as business offices and services there—finds MMDA's traffic plans most unacceptable. Members of the community argue that, as the private sector, they took it upon themselves to green and beautify that traffic artery to ensure that, in the midst of the urban sprawl, there is continuous flow of fresh air and trees and plants to provide a healthy quality of life for the community. To have those efforts negated despite meetings and court orders smacked of abuse of power.

The TWG is multi-sectoral. It is made up of representatives of the MMDA, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City government, schools and subdivisions in the area. Additional assistance is given by experts from the University of the Philippines' Center for Transportation Studies.

It would have been a beautiful example, says Dr. Angelina P. Galang, director of Miriam College's Environmental Education and Research Center, of how government and civil society can work together. The input from their collective expertise could have resulted in plans and strategies that would work for the good of all.

As it is, even recommendations and suggestions from the Transportation Science Society of the Philippines on the MMDA Traffic Plan for Katipunan seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Maybe the recommendations are too technical, too difficult to accomplish; much easier to cut trees, order U-turns in impossible places.

There has been no meeting of minds, only a clash of ideas. So there are now all sorts of rerouting schemes on Katipunan, one of them the enforcement of U-turns which is causing anxiety among motorists who fear these are invitations to accidents and disasters.

On Feb. 3, we received a copy of a statement by Dr. Galang, issued it seems at the height of the resumption of tree-cutting, where she laments the way "the MMDA has disregarded community sensibilities and efforts (on Katipunan Avenue), as well as a Malacañang-brokered agreement, even acting in contempt of court." She adds "our officials should not have such flawed values and attitudes regarding environment, responsiveness to civil society and the rule of law."

She concludes: "On Feb. 2, Judge Marlene Gonzalez Sison of QC (Regional Trial Court) Branch 85 issued a strongly-worded Temporary Restraining Order which stops any further (MMDA) activity. CoCap (Concerned Citizens against Pollution) has also filed a contempt charge against MMDA. Citizen action is the only way to stop abusive officials."

It seems providential that the IBP and the Katipunan community should organize themselves for the environment, each in its fashion, almost at the same time. We hope that they will be able to work together, for we all have a stake in their crusades.

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com

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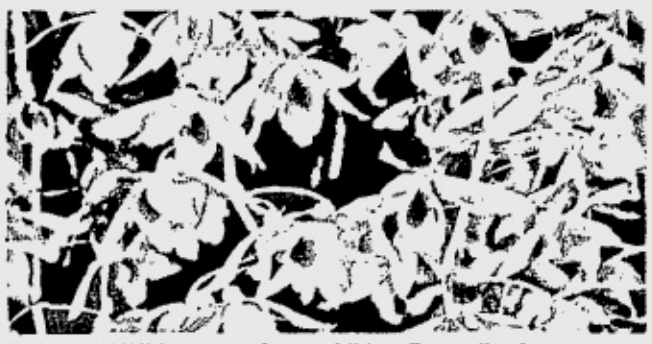

DENDROBIUM anosum, from exhibitor Evangeline Lee

58th orchid show opens Feb. 27

THE PHILIPPINE Orchid Society will hold its 58th Annual Orchid and Garden Show Feb. 27-March 8 at the Orchidarium Park, Quezon City Hall Complex.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony that formally opens the show will be held 9 a.m., Feb. 27. Theme of the show is "Orchid Fiesta."

The event includes free daily lectures, 2-5 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 a.m.-12 noon and 2-5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The schedule of lectures:

Feb. 27 (Friday), 9 a.m.-12 noon, "Growing Oncidium Orchids," Corazon C. Purificacion; Feb. 28 (Saturday) 9 a.m.-12 noon, "Orchids for Landscaping," Modesto M. Manglicmot and 2-5 p.m. "Growing Phalaenopsis Orchids," Remedios Rodis Santelices; Feb. 29 (Sunday), 9 a.m.-12 noon, "Starting an Orchid Collection," Norberto R. Bautista and 2-5 p.m., "Philippine Orchid Species," Kelvin Neil B. Manubay; March 1 (Monday), 2-5 p.m., "Orchid Flower Arrangement", Glenn S. Remorca; March 2 (Tuesday), 2-5 p.m., "Growing Dendrobium Orchids," Anna Ruth Purificacion-Conde; March 3 (Wednesday), 2-5 p.m., "Orchid Potting Techniques," Andres S. Golamco Jr.; March 4 (Thursday), 2-5 p.m., "Orchid Greenhouse/Nursery Design," Raymundo G. Ong; March 5 (Friday), 2-5 p.m., "Growing Vanda Orchids," Vicente M. Chin Jr.; March 6 (Saturday), 9 a.m.-12 noon, "Bacterial and Fungal Diseases of Orchids," Dr. Victoria R. Daquiaog and 2-5 p.m., "Insect Pests of Orchids" by Dr. Marcela M. Navasero; March 7 (Sunday), 9 a.m.-12 noon, "Viral Diseases of Orchids," Dr. Prescilla M. Barcial and 2-5 p.m., "Innovative Approach on Asexual Propagation of Cattleya Orchids," Inocencio M. Cudal; March 8 (Monday), 2-5 p.m., "Starting an Orchid Business," Rolita V. Spowart.

The event is held in cooperation with the Quezon City Government through its Parks Development and Administration Department.

Visit www.philippineorchidsociety.org or call (632) 9294425.

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Reg. Price 34.00

WHAMMO'S Fudge Cake • Or Selected Flavors 6s
TLC PRICE ₱52.00 /pk.
Reg. Price 57.25

MUCHY'S Muzic Wafer • Or Selected Flavors 250 g
TLC PRICE ₱58.50 /pk.
Reg. Price 61.50

MURRAY Sugar Free Cookies • Choco Sandwich 164 g • Chocolate Fudge 170 g
TLC PRICE ₱79.50 /pk.
Reg. Price 83.50

Fresh Pick-Idea

AJINOMOTO

ASPARAGUS-TOMATO STIR FRY

Ingredients:

2 tbsps.	cooking oil
1/2 cup	fresh asparagus, sliced diagonally into 2 inches long
1 1/2 cups	sliced fresh button mushrooms
2 pcs.	sliced tomatoes
2 tbsps.	spring onions, cut into 1 inch long
1 (7 g.)	AJINOMOTO Ginisa Flavor Mix
1 tbsp.	soy sauce
1 tsp.	cornstarch dissolved in
1 tbsp.	water

Procedure:

In hot oil, sauté asparagus and fresh button mushrooms. Cover and cook for 2 minutes. Remove cover, add tomatoes and stir fry for another minute. Add spring onions and continue stir frying. Sprinkle AJINOMOTO Ginisa Flavor Mix. Pour cornstarch solution, mix well and cook for another minute before turning off fire. Serve hot.

Makes 3 - 5 servings.

MONTEREY Ground Pork Reg. P 137.00 — ₱129.00

MONTEREY Pork Butterfly Cut Reg. P 150.00 — ₱140.00

MONTEREY Beef Brisket Reg. P 184.00 — ₱170.00

FRESH CHOICE Ground Beef Reg. P 118.00 — ₱110.00

FRESH CHOICE Beef Cubes Reg. P 162.00 — ₱155.00

FRESH CHOICE Lean Ground Pork Reg. P 126.00 — ₱119.00

Pusit Bisaya — ₱145.00

Boneless Bangus — ₱160.00

Tomato Native — ₱10.00

AJINOMOTO Ginisa Flavor Mix 50 g Reg. P 9.50 — ₱9.00

Asparagus • Long 200 g — ₱26.00

Radish White — ₱15.00

Shitake Mushroom — ₱242.00

Banana Lacatan — ₱25.00

Pineapple — ₱22.00

FUJI Apples #80 — ₱55.00

Orange #88 — ₱72.00

GOLDILOCKS Polvoron • Or Selected Flavors 12s
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Reg. Price 74.50

MONTEREY Chicharon 50 g
TLC PRICE ₱20.50 /pk.
Reg. Price 21.50

OZARK Butter Pop Corn • Light 255 g • Extra 297 g
TLC PRICE ₱72.50 ea.
Reg. Price 76.50
*Promoter SM Bagio

CLOUD 9 Chooey Bar • Choco • Toffee 40s
TLC PRICE ₱34.50 /pk.

WRIGLEY'S Orbit Sugar Free Gum • Spearmint • For Kids 30s
TLC PRICE ₱67.50 /pk.

FERNA Powdered Food Flavor • Vanilla 50 g
TLC PRICE ₱37.50 ea.
Reg. Price 39.75

E-PLUS Energy Drink 150 mL
TLC PRICE ₱21.50 ea.
Reg. Price 22.50

GATORADE Thirst Quencher • Fierce Green Tea Lime • Fierce Blue Bolt 500 mL
TLC PRICE ₱31.95 ea.
Reg. Price 33.50

BIG 250 Juice Drink • Orange 250 mL/10s
TLC PRICE ₱39.75 /pk.

COKE In Can 330 mL/6s
TLC PRICE ₱69.00 /pk.
Reg. Price 78.00

LISTERINE Mouthwash • Total Care 89 mL
TLC PRICE ₱53.75 ea.
Reg. Price 56.75

BEAM Toothpaste • Or Selected Flavors 150 mL
TLC PRICE ₱34.75 ea.
Reg. Price 36.75

ESKINOL Facial Wash • Refreshing 100 mL
TLC PRICE ₱58.75 ea.
Reg. Price 61.75

GATSBY Hair Styling Gel • On Selected Variants 75 g
TLC PRICE ₱50.00 ea.
Reg. Price 56.75

GANDA Papaya Soap 135 g
TLC PRICE ₱24.75 ea.
Reg. Price 29.75
*Promoter SM Bagio Bacoor

SILKA Papaya Body Wash 100 mL
TLC PRICE ₱29.75 ea.
Reg. Price 34.75
*Promoter SM Bagio Bacoor

SKIN WHITE Underarm Night Cream 45 g
TLC PRICE ₱97.75 ea.
Reg. Price 109.75
*Promoter SM Bagio Bacoor

PH CARE Feminine Wash • Or Selected Variants 150 mL
TLC PRICE ₱85.50 ea.
Reg. Price 89.75

LIBRESSE Feminine Napkin • Classic Max Cotton Dry 8s
TLC PRICE ₱20.50 pk.
Reg. Price 23.75

DRYPERS Wee Wee Dry Diapers • Large 24s
TLC PRICE ₱194.75 /pk.
Reg. Price 207.00

PRIDE Detergent Powder 2 kg
TLC PRICE ₱79.50 ea.
Reg. Price 83.75

FRESH AIR Bathroom Deodorizer • Or Selected Variants 50 g
TLC PRICE ₱10.50 ea.
Reg. Price 12.75
*Promoter SM Bagio Bacoor Sta. Mesa

BAYGON Liquid Insect Spray • Clear 150 mL
TLC PRICE ₱36.00 ea.
Reg. Price 38.75

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or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

2004 L'Oreal Colour Trophy winner Francis Quinones of Piandre Salon-Libis

Hairstylist bags award

FRANCIS Quinones of Piandre Salon-Libis won this year's L'Oreal Color Trophy Award.

He received his prize during a gala evening held in the Isla ballroom of the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

A total of 15 finalists competed for the annual award were judged according to originality of style, modern cutting techniques and hair color combinations.

Quinones was second runner-up in the 2001 L'Oreal Color Trophy Awards.

Other winners this year are: Edgar Cueto of Jesi Mendez Salon-Alabang, first runner-up and Mega Magazine Cover Look Award; Nelson Cruz of Essensuals Toni & Guy, second runner-up; and Cris Estalilla of Prive II by Ge-

HAIRSTYLIST / 13

L'OREAL Paris Best Makeup winner and Inq7.net Reader's Choice awardee Cris Estalilla of Salon Prive II with his model

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MALATE ☎ 521.8143	PUZZLES/AFTER 8 MEN OPPOSE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
NOVALICHES ☎ 936.9757	BEAT BOX HEADWORKS	MUSIC CIRCUIT OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
BIÑAN ☎ (049)511.7268	EMMANUELLE KOOLJACKS/E-MAGE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S
JUPITER ☎ 890.4735	FIRST SIGHT SOUND AUTHORITY	NO ENTRANCE FEE
REMEDIOS ☎ 522.0429	VERSE 2/PRP MUSIC ZONE	NO ENTRANCE FEE
TOMAS MORATO ☎ 371.1473	RHYTHM ACE SYMPOSIUM	NO ENTRANCE FEE

FEBRUARY 13 FRIDAY

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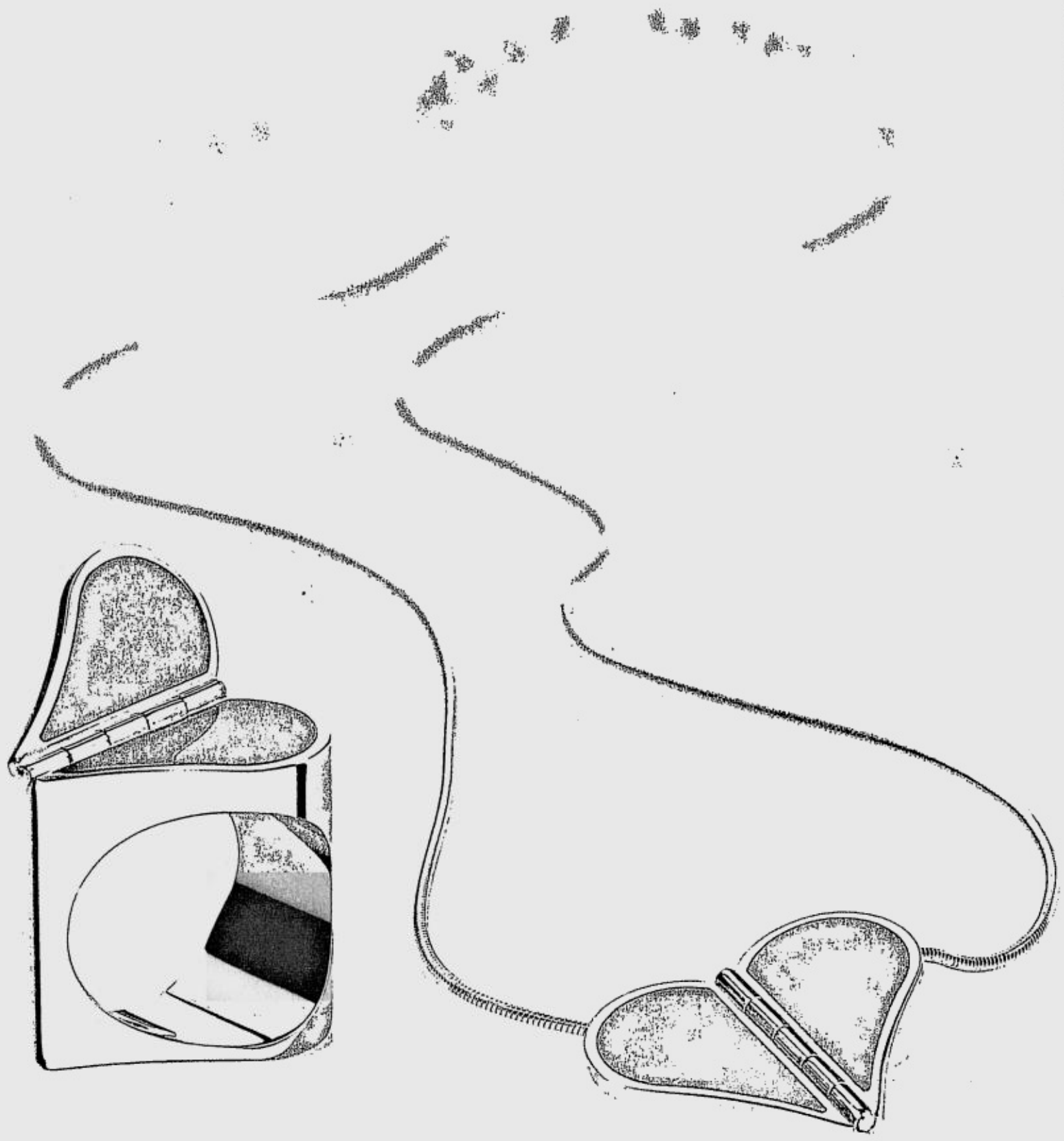
EMI presents
truefaith
FEB 13 · 4pm — Centermall, Bldg. B — SM City BICUTAN
FEB 14 · 4pm — UGF / West Wing — SM City MANILA

...among the many finds for valentine's at gift gate.



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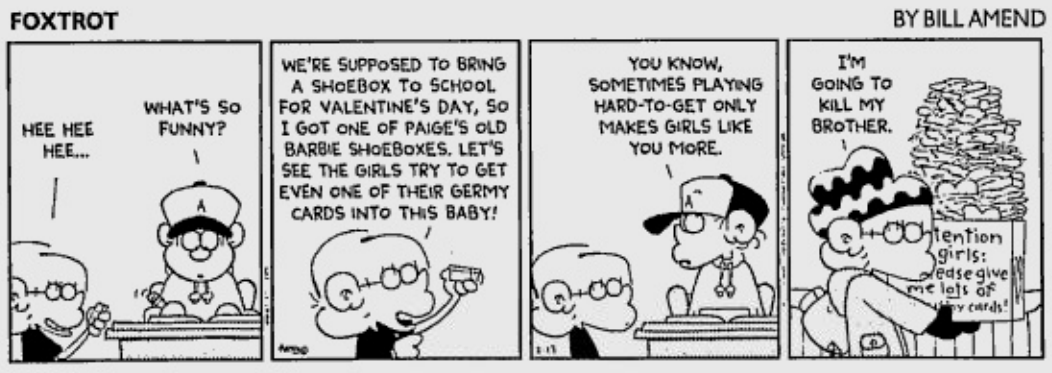
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND



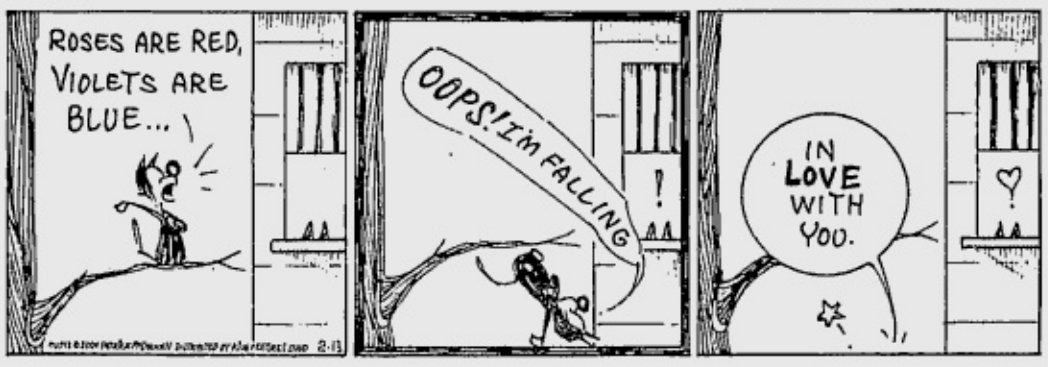
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are strong, outgoing, spontaneous and very energetic. Nothing holds you back! Your high spirits and uninhibited behavior make others marvel. You are logical, rational and very frank. You believe in "live and let live." Others admire your tolerance. Important choices await you in 2004. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: George Segal, actor; Stockard Channing, actress; Peter Gabriel, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're in the mood to work hard for your money today. You might also work hard to organize things within your family structure and where you live. Go for it!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Whatever you do today, you are capable of long, sustained effort. Knowing this, why not tackle jobs you've been avoiding for a while?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't beat yourself up today about things that you didn't do. We all have tons of things we didn't do. It goes with the territory of being a frail human.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Others might help you to do something today. By all means, don't hesitate to ask or enlist the help of friends if you are painting, moving or cleaning up stuff. (Buy beer.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're prepared to work patiently for your goals today. That's why you'll put out the effort for tomorrow rather than settle for the pleasure of today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Take care of details and red tape connected with publishing, legal matters, travel and higher education. You're willing to fill out forms and do the missionary work to process things.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Since you have the patience to plow through details and do boring work today, use this energy to tackle red tape connected with insurance, estates, inheritances and shared property.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with partners about what you want to achieve tomorrow as opposed to today can be productive. Planning is important. There is an old saying: A good beginning is halfway done.

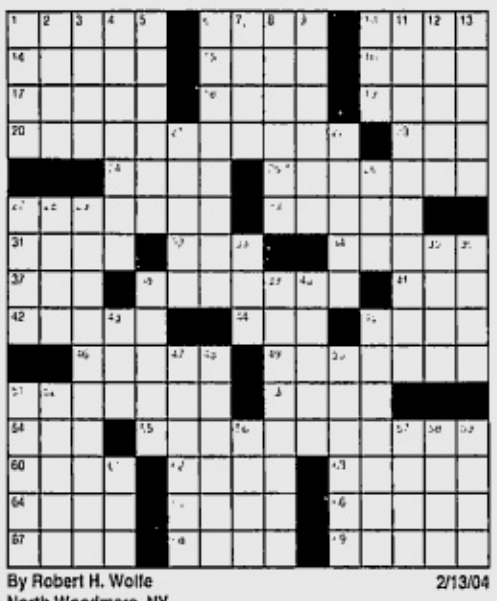
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're in the mood to work hard. More than that, you're willing to do boring, detailed work that you would normally avoid. Act on this impulse!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Increased responsibilities with children do not faze you today. It's as if you have four hands. You can deliver the goods and do what is expected of you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Tackle yucky jobs at home today (things like cleaning under the sink). You're prepared to roll up your sleeves and get things done, even if the task is laborious, painstaking and unpleasant. (Impressive!)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent day for careful planning. Go ahead with any kind of project that requires patience and attention to detail. You will do an excellent job!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
2/13/04

ACROSS
1 Aquarium favorite
6 Creative work
10 Wound cover
14 Messed up
15 Window square
16 Top-drawer
17 Fashion shape
18 Cosmo rival
19 Song for two
20 Legitimate underwear?
23 Squealer
24 Slight
25 "Love and Marriage" singer
27 Prepare for printing
30 Off. skill
31 Word before block or house
32 __ Anne de Beaupre
34 This place
37 Parts of psyches
38 Actor Lionel
41 Buy the farm
42 No-frills
44 Cub Scout unit
45 Congeal
46 Junk
49 Piloted
51 Shannen of "Beverly Hills 90210"
53 "Rule Britannia" composer
54 Go __ (freak out)
55 Happy home ingredient?
60 Singer McEntire
62 Part of RPI
63 Japanese immigrant
64 Lobster pot
65 Death rattle
66 Spoke angrily
67 Rodgers' collaborator
68 Iditarod entry
69 Day's march

DOWN
1 Greenish blue
2 Perry's creator
3 Math course
4 Changed a title
5 Simpson and Astaire
6 Light musical production
7 Hinayana Buddhist language
8 Except if
9 Think best
10 Low
11 Tennis match sequences?
12 Close in poetry
13 Siamese fighting fish
21 Brittany port
22 Curl one's upper lip
26 Literary bits
27 Windy City paper
28 Luke's Jedi mentor
29 Stay on the wagon?
33 Conclusion
35 Flooring piece
36 Maintained
38 Head wrap
39 Processed seawater
40 Door
43 Wrath
45 Delivers raspberries
47 Parts of a flight
48 Church book
50 Complete
51 Vader or Maul
52 Word with soap or horse
56 Key
57 Links grp.
58 Leak slowly
59 Powerful trend
61 Fitting

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	A	G	S		A	C	M	E		I	M	P	S
H	E	N	R	I		G	O	A	D		N	O	A	H
A	N	Y	I	D	I	O	T	C	A	N	F	A	C	E
D	E	A	D		C	U	F			O	A	S	F	S
			I	B	E	T		T	E	R	N			
	A	C	R	I	S	I	S	I	T	S	T	H	I	S
S	T	O	O	D				A	N	T	E		A	C	E
A	S	S	N		R	A	S	T	A		S	L	I	T
R	E	B		N	E	S	S			E	T	O	N	S
D	A	Y	T	O	D	A	Y	I	I	V	I	N	G	
			S	H	O	P		E	D	E	N			
S	I	L	E	O			I	A	L		R	I	F	E
T	H	A	T	W	E	A	R	S	Y	O	U	O	U	T
E	A	R	S		A	L	O	E		S	P	U	M	E
T	I	D	E		R	A	N	D		E	S	S	E	S

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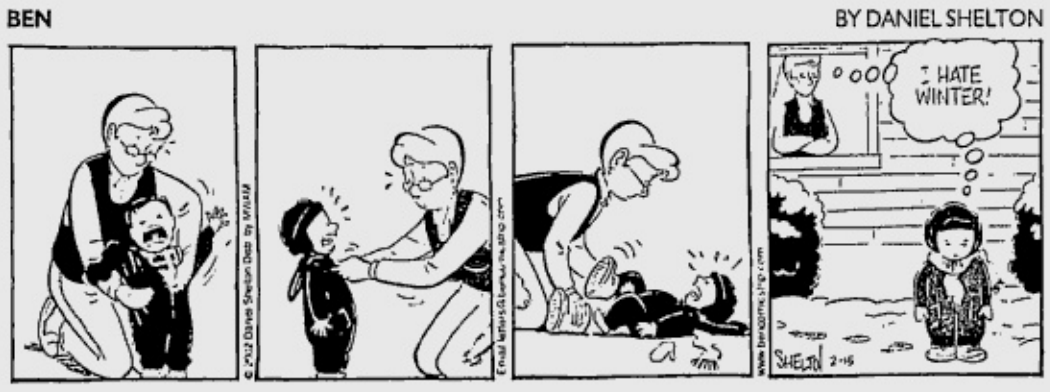
2/13/04

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON



MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28 !

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

MODELS sport the final 15 hairstyling entries in the L'Oreal Colour Trophy 2004.

Hairstylist bags award

From page 11

off Simpson, L'Oreal Paris Best Makeup and Inq7.net Reader's Choice Award.

Judges were celebrity hairdressers Olaf & Bert from Holland, fashion stylist Jenni Epperson, Mega Magazine beauty editor Vicky Tensuan and makeup expert Patrick Rosas. INQUIRER columnist Tessa Prieto-Valdes presented the Best Dressed Award. Escorting her was Inq7.net's Paolo Prieto, who presented the Reader's Choice Award.

Featured were performances by Olaf & Bert from Holland, L'Oreal's international guest artists.

Guests included Geoff Simpson with Kenvyn Cuevas, Jesi and Gina Mendez, Angelo Justin and the Franck Provost Salon group, Crispin Britanico and the Hairbytes Salon group, 2002 L'Oreal Color Trophy winner Danny Katalbas of Emphasis Salon with Teng Roma, Victor Ortega, Shu Uemura's Tina Tinio and Xeng Zulueta, L'Oreal's Leica Carpo and Celine Gabriel, Ipe Cruz, GP Reyes, Celine Lopez, Romina Urra Gonzales, Fiona Lucas, Jane Kingsu and Carole Cuasay.

New products to enhance the eyes

GREAT-LOOKING eyes can now be achieved with Nu Skin's newest products, Nu Colour's Eye Makeup Remover and Ideal Eyes.

Nu Colour's Eye Makeup Remover is designed to gently yet thoroughly get rid of eye makeup. It effectively dissolves all types of makeup, including waterproof mascara, which usually leaves a dark shadow under the eyes if not removed properly.

The eye makeup remover is specially formulated with mild emollients and cleansers derived from natural rice oil, which fully eliminate makeup build-up while providing moisture to the delicate eye area. The product also has a non-greasy feel and is hypoallergenic and pH balanced.

Tired-looking eyes, on the other hand, can be revived with Nu Skin's Ideal Eyes. This unique product refines and improves the appearance of the delicate eye area with its blend of free-flowing, pure Vitamin C and Vitamin A, which provide utmost nourishment to the skin.

NU Colour's Eye Makeup Remover

Nu Skin is one of the top multi-level marketing companies worldwide. The company manufactures and markets premium personal care products, cosmetics and nutritional supplements via person-to-person distribution.

Call 6890333 or visit www.nuskin.com.ph

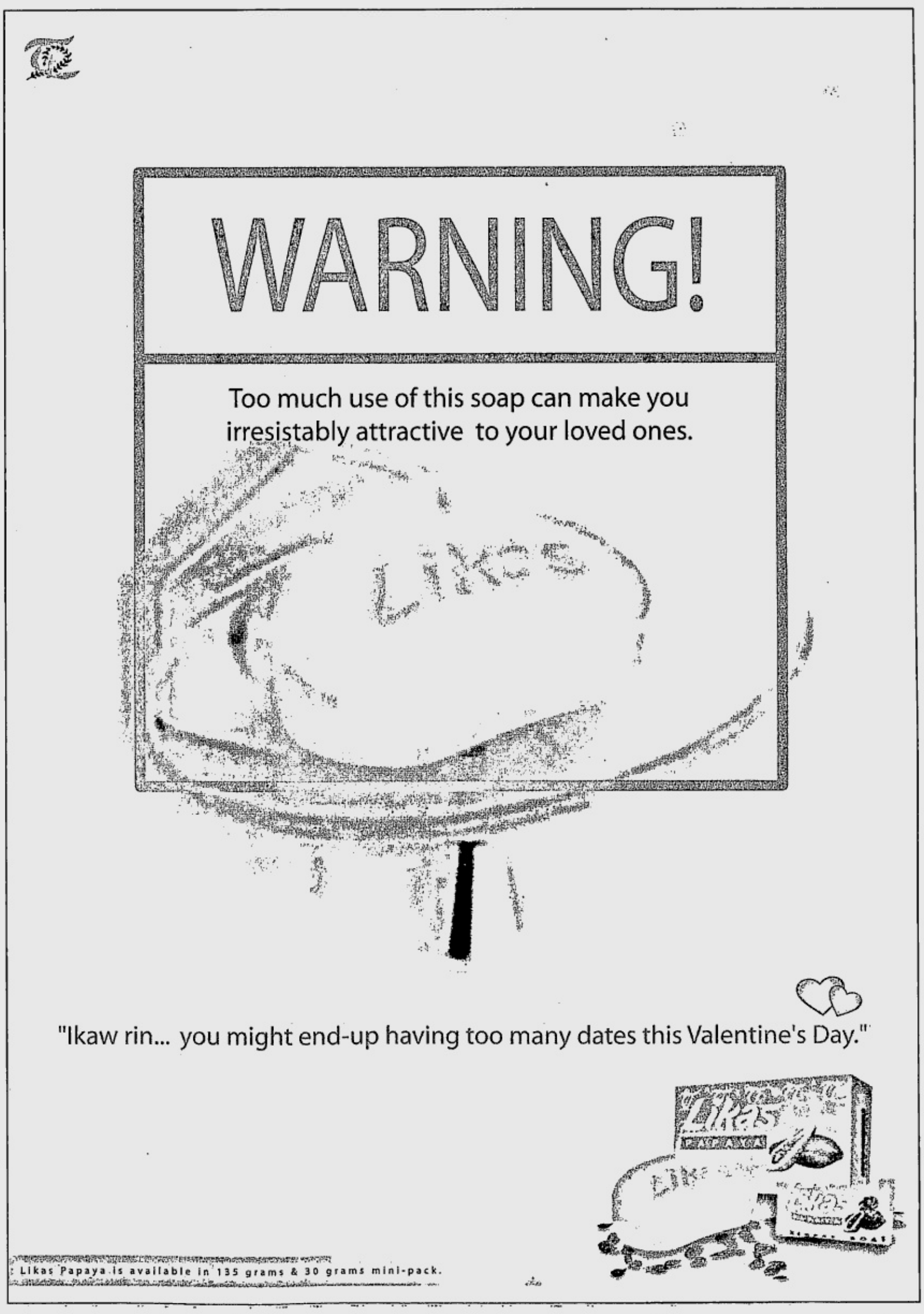
Big mailbox for Valentine

YOU have a topline tech-savvy chum, but she's already got all the latest gadgets and you can't think of something unique to give her this Valentine's. Well, here's betting she still doesn't have a big personal mailbox to receive all those incoming e-mail with those huge multi-megabyte MP3 or multimedia attachments.

What you can give her is a huge 50-MB mailbox at Pinay.Ph. Did we say huge? You read it right, 50MB, not 5MB—easily 10 times greater than what most local Internet service providers are offering and better than the free services of Hotmail or Yahoo, which won't allow you to accept large attachments at all.

For just the cost of a cell card as contribution toward the upkeep of the web site, users of Pinay.Ph can avail themselves of a 50-MB mailbox for one whole year.

What's also nice about this non-commercial service is that users are likely to get a distinctive e-mail name, say, sandy@pinay.ph (this username, by the way, is still available), instead of some very impersonal name like sandy2004@yahoo.com. Visit www.pinay.ph



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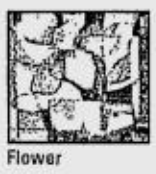
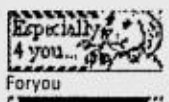

Flower

PICTURE MESSAGES

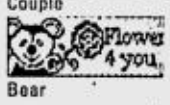
Flowers

Couple

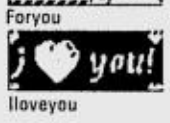


Foryou

Loveyou



Bear



Ilove you

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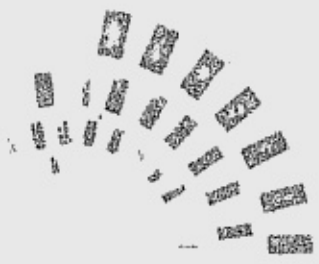
E-Cards	Click The Mall >> Enter Mall >> Arcade >> Pics & Sounds >> E-Cards >> Valentine >> Select a Content Provider >> Select a content	Type "val e-cards" >> Send to 2300 >> Select a Content Provider >> Select a content
Love Quotes	Click The Mall >> Enter Mall >> Daily Special >> Quotes>> Valentine >> Wimson >> Love Quotes >> Select a love quote	Type "val quotes" >> Send to 2300 >> Select a Content Provider >> Select a content

You may download other contents from a wide selection of cool and fun graphics, polytones and monotones available at "The Mall". Click The Mall >> Enter Mall >> Arcade >> Pics & Sounds >> (Select a content).

This promo is also brought to you by: Boombox!, Dload Station, Eurofun, Gooey, Mr. Musiko, MStyle, and Wimson. Discounts apply to selected Valentine contents only. For more information you can visit www.suncellular.com ph or call our 24 hour hotline through 395-8000 or dial 200 for toll-free calls using your Sun Cellular phone.

RINGTONES

TITLE	ARTIST	KEYWORD
She (poly)	Elvis Costello	elviscshe
My Girl (poly)	The Temptations	mygirl
214 (mono)	Rivermaya	214



SUN CELLULAR
Everything Important is Under the Sun

Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0301, Series of 2004

Trend Lifestyle

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Suddenly, it's pastel!

Now's the time to find your spring fling

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Edwin Bacasmas
WITH ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

'TIS the season of pastel hues so take a break, not from your sweetie, but from your wardrobe of dour blacks, grays and browns. Satisfy your sweet cravings with vibrant candy-colored apparel and accessories and some frosty sorbet-tint-

SUDDENLY/J2

Being with You
Valentine Getaway
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Sweet Surprises
Win premium Valentine gift packs instantly for a P500 minimum purchase at Chef's Avenue from Feb. 16-15, 2004!
*Just present your receipt at the redemption booth at
My Sweet Valentine!!!
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(CLOCKWISE, from top) Diesel floral skirt, Via Venetto bag, Solo polkadot watch, Casio alligator watch, Via Venetto sandal with floral accent, Diesel sleeveless tee, Kate Spade bag, Louis Vuitton monogram sandal, Calvin Klein T-back panty, Solo floral headband, Kate Spade slide with ball heel, Coach bag, Kate Spade two-tone thong and Diesel bell-sleeve shirt

ANNE Klein wraparound dress, Episode chiffon skirt (has a matching sleevel and Jessica '20s-style dress

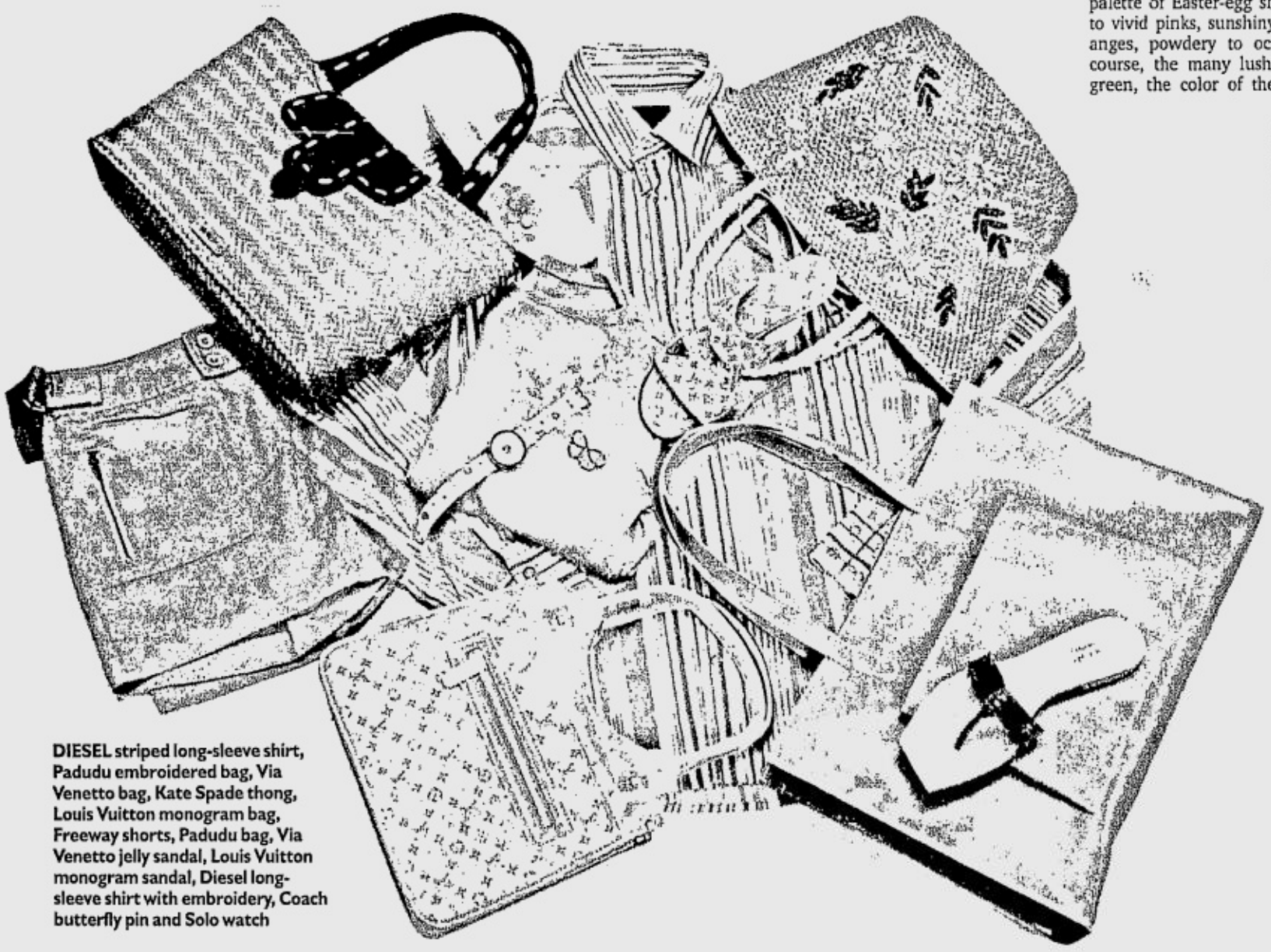
Sudde it's pa

From page J1

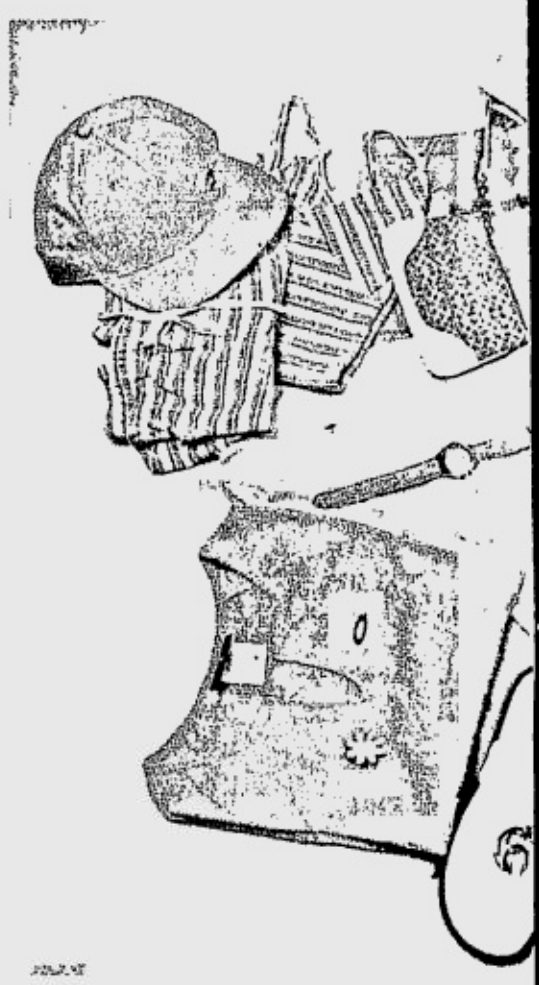
ed bags and shoes to fan away the sweltering season heat. These, minus all the sinful calories.

Try garment and accent pieces from a palette of Easter-egg shades—bashful blush to vivid pinks, sunshiny yellows to juicy oranges, powdery to oceanic blues and, of course, the many lush variations of go-go green, the color of the moment. Go solid, stripes, polka dot or springti For clothes, everything shoul and airy: cottons, linens, chi

Keep footsies looking bri options: pristine-white thon ers, trendy jelly slippers to sandals. From canvas to st even leather, there are bags add punch to your spring headbands to signature crus



DIESEL striped long-sleeve shirt, Padudu embroidered bag, Via Venetto bag, Kate Spade thong, Louis Vuitton monogram bag, Freeway shorts, Padudu bag, Via Venetto jelly sandal, Louis Vuitton monogram sandal, Diesel long-sleeve shirt with embroidery, Coach butterfly pin and Solo watch



JESSICA striped long-sleeve shirt, Alfex jelly-strap w crusher hat, Baby G watch, Oakley wallet, Anne Klei alligator watch, Colour Eighteen blouse with glitters, Colour Eighteen cullotes

BLACK bead handle contrasts dramatically with red silk bag.

RED silk bag with handle made of water pearls

Bag a happy Valentine

STYLIST Rachy Cuna offers interesting options for men still looking for a special Valentine gift for their loved one.

As spring and summer previews from fashion capitals indicate, the year 2004 may be the time for the Orient to set trends and showcase the best of Asia. Japanese obis and Nehru collars, corsets and cheongsams have become the rage.

Cuna responds to this growing passion for Asian things with his new limited-edition bag collection inspired by the boundless treasures of the continent—from Tokyo to Beijing, Hong Kong to Bali, Bangkok to Malacca.

Drawing their unique shape from the east's traditional pot, whose cylindrical or round shape represents infinity, the bags feature Oriental accessories such as crystal beads, coral and amethyst. In silk or velvet, the bags also carry other Asian symbols of abundance and tranquility—the Oriental knot, the netsuki, and the Buddha, among others.

Cuna's new bag collection is available for a limited period of time at Janilyn, Mall C, Glorietta 1, Ayala Center, Makati. For inquiries, call 8126307.

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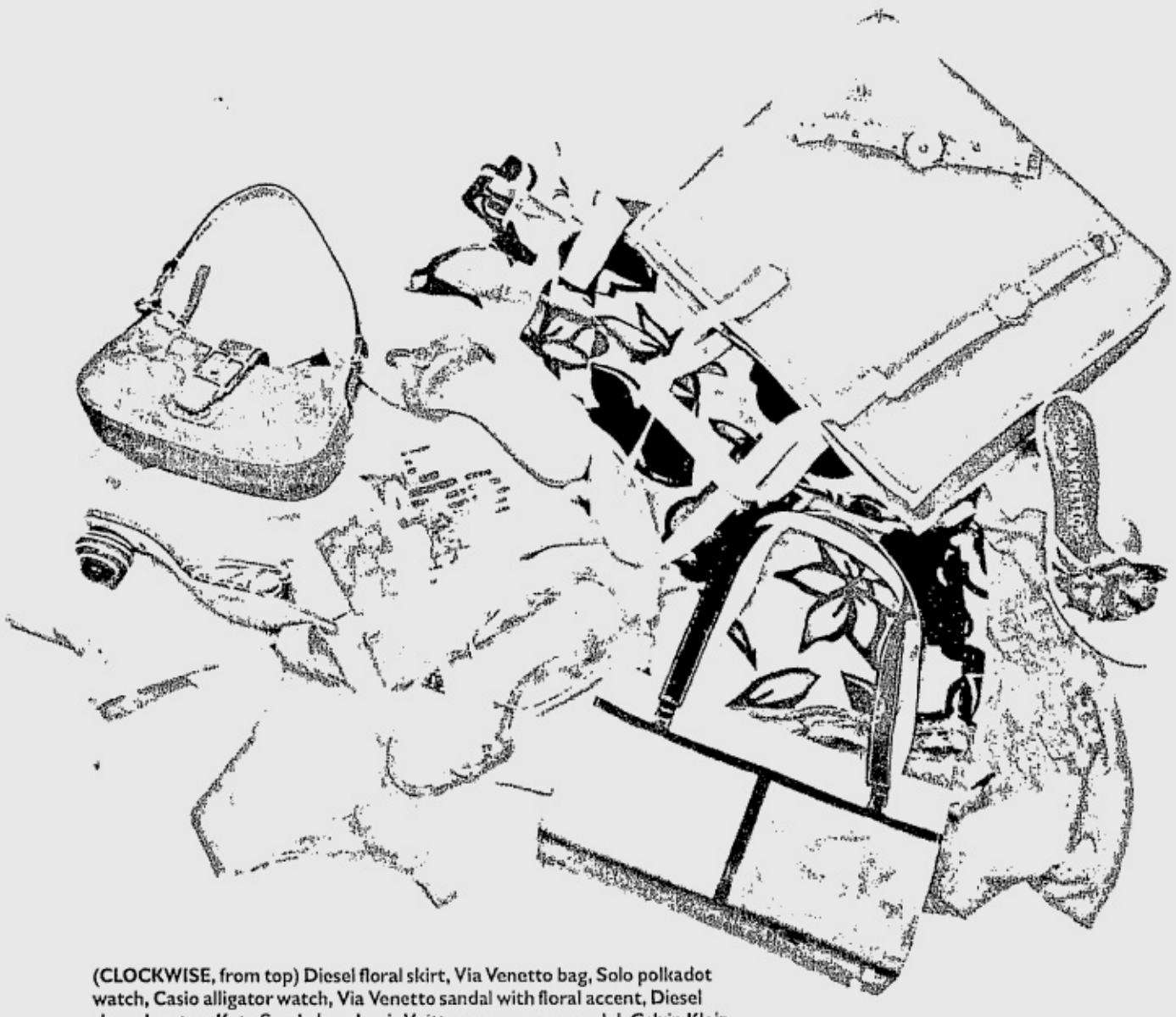
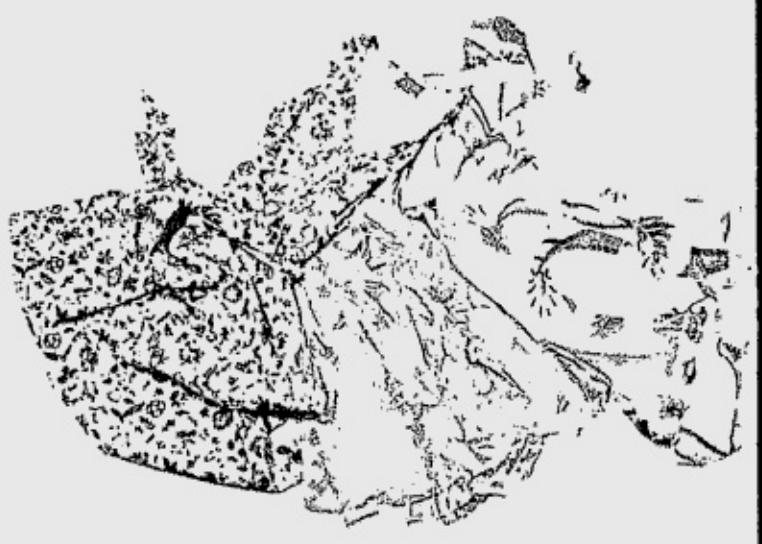


(CLOCKWISE, from top) Diesel floral skirt, Via Venetto bag, Solo polkadot watch, Casio alligator watch, Via Venetto sandal with floral accent, Diesel sleeveless tee, Kate Spade bag, Louis Vuitton monogram sandal, Calvin Klein T-back panty, Solo floral headband, Kate Spade slide with ball heel, Coach bag, Kate Spade two-tone thong and Diesel bell-sleeve shirt



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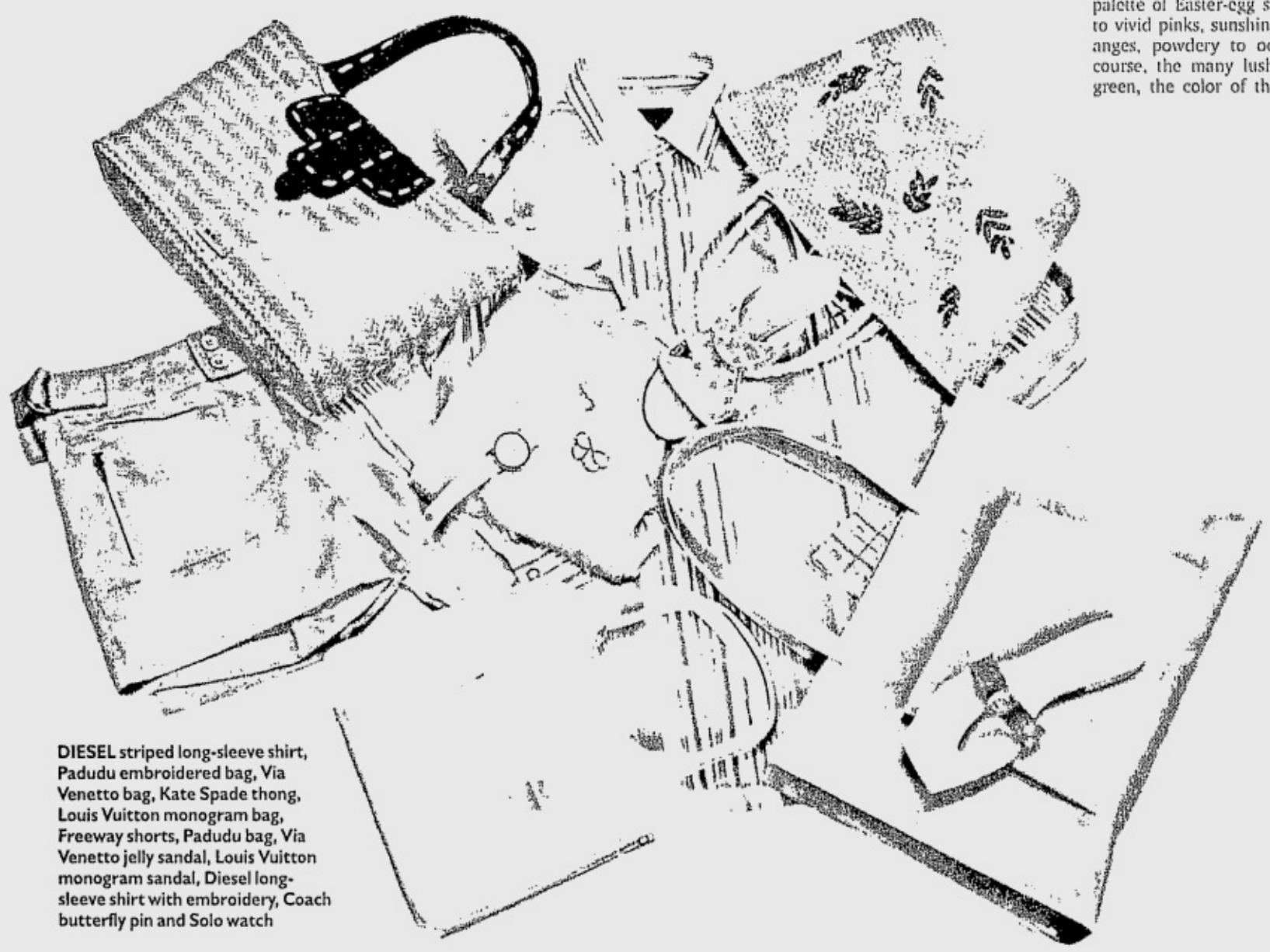

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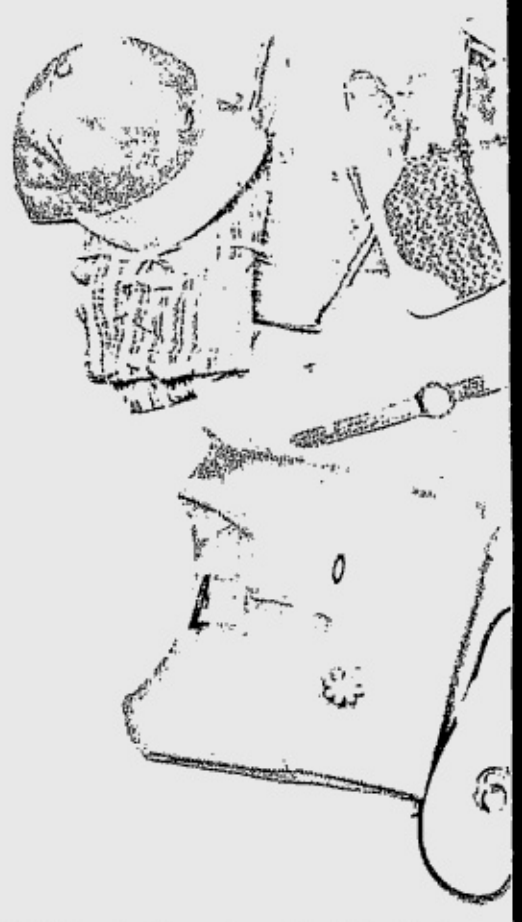

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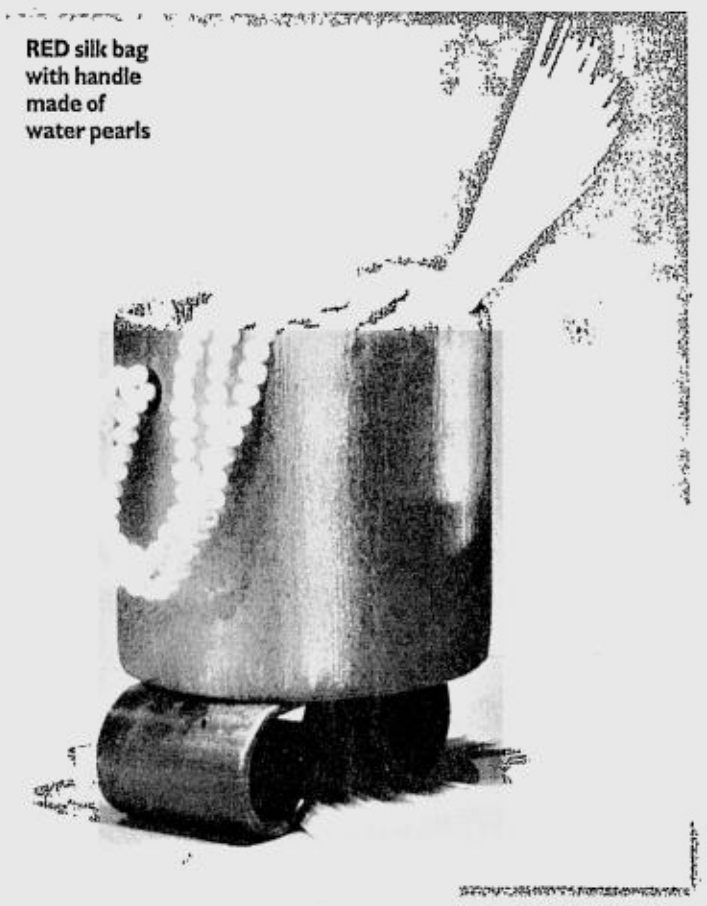

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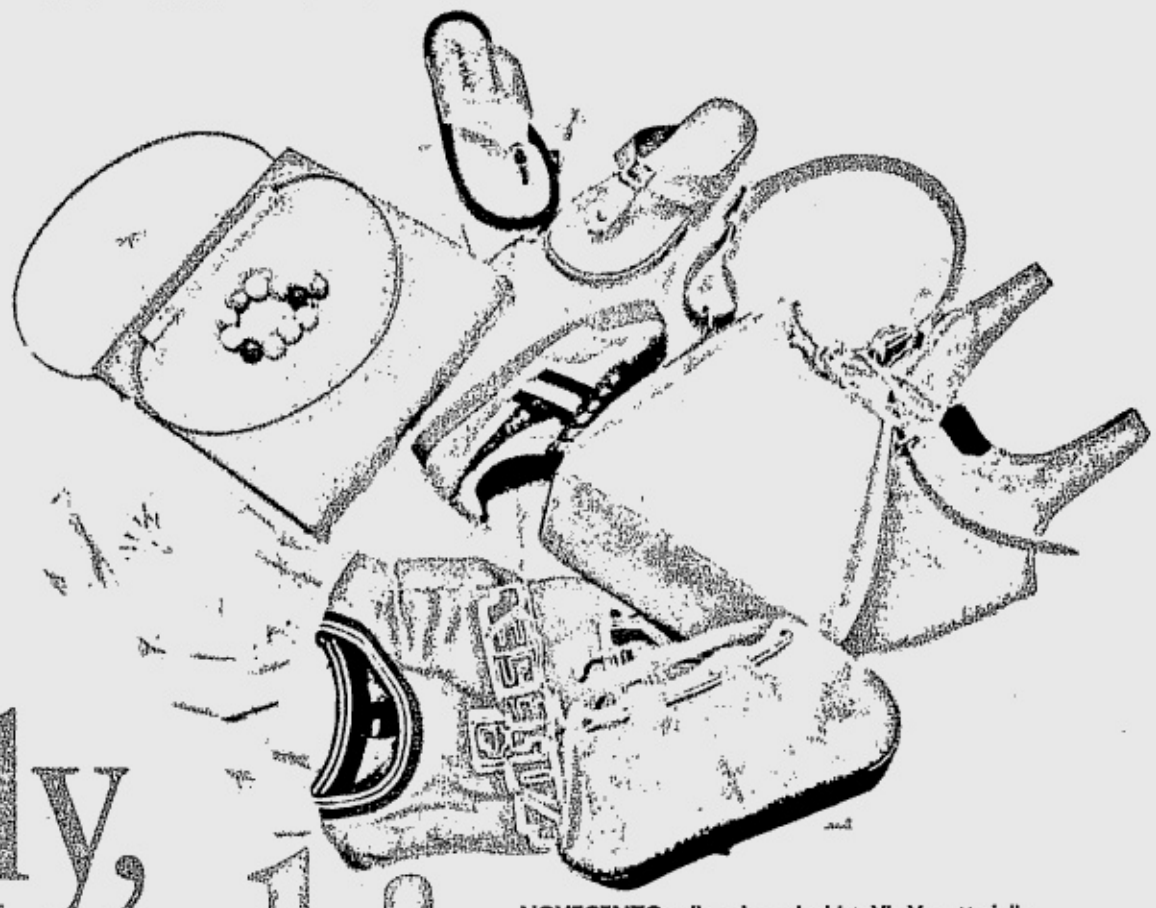

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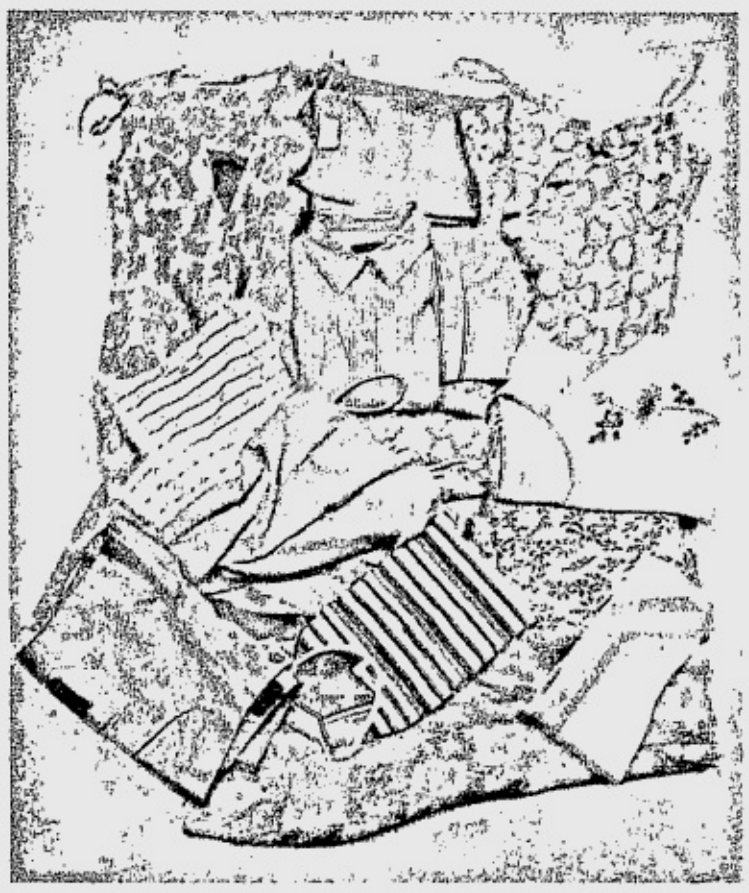
ally, tell!

NOVECENTO collared men's shirt, Via Venetto jelly thong, Louis Vuitton thong, Louis Vuitton satchel, Solo tank, T Studio bag, Diesel men's T-shirt, Solo sleeveless top with hibiscus print, Louis Vuitton city bag, Solo bubblegum bracelet and Gola sneaker



(CLOCKWISE, from top left) Colour Eighteen sleeveless dress, Liz Claiborne sleeveless top, Episode Studio dress, Liz Claiborne cap-sleeve embroidered top, Liz Claiborne floral pants, Colour Eighteen knit top, Liz Claiborne long-sleeve top, Freeway striped halter top, Freeway shorts, Colour Eighteen striped cardigan and tank, and DKNY striped long-sleeve shirt

Candy-colored clothes satisfy your sweet cravings minus the calories

T STUDIO striped bag, Oakley men's T-shirt, Alfex jelly-strap watch, Gola sneaker, Solo polka dot bag, Oakley socks, T studio wedge sandal, Padudu patchwork bag and Novecento collared men's shirt

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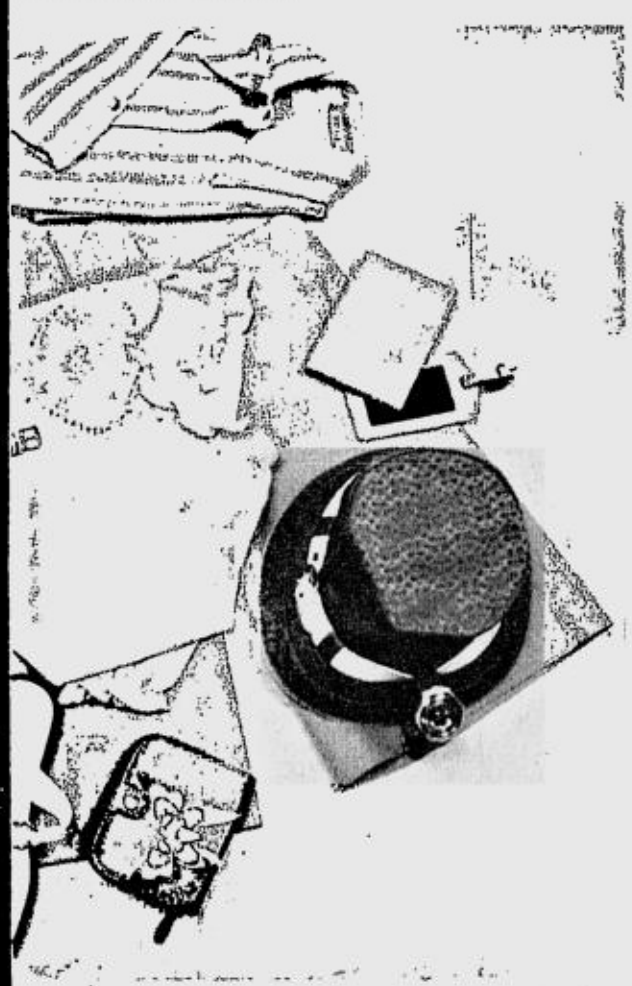
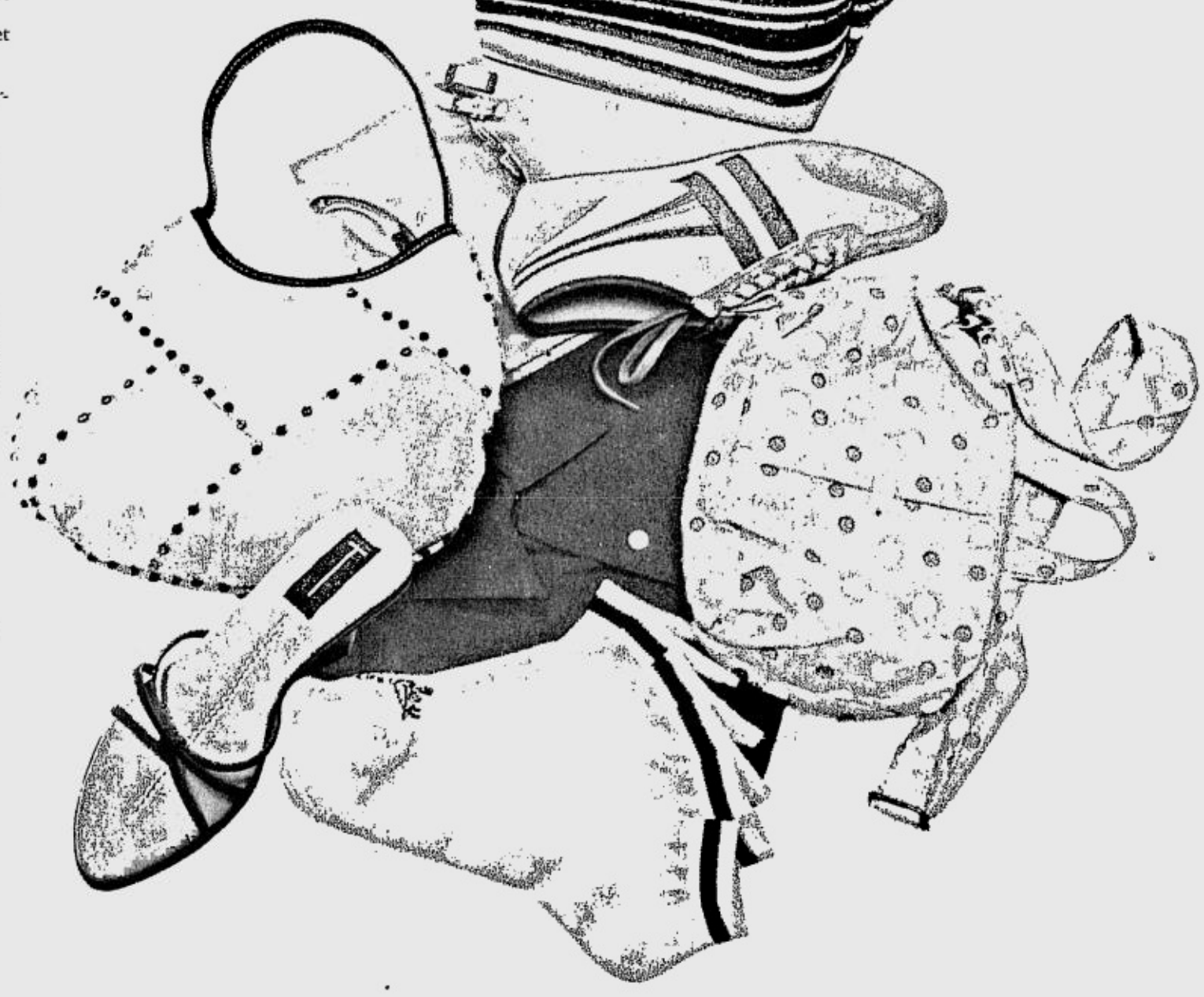
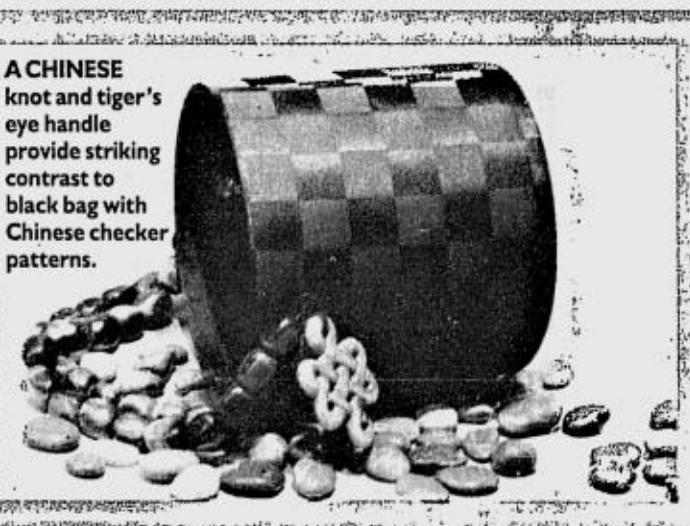
So, plan your spring shopping tryst and get your bonbon fashion fix.

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph





tch, Kenneth Cole passport wallet and luggage tag, Coach thong, Oakley ¾-sleeve shirt, Coach flower pin, Casio Calvin Klein shorts and tank, Oakley cap, Coach wristlet and



A CHINESE knot and tiger's eye handle provide striking contrast to black bag with Chinese checker patterns.

CHINESE checkers inspired these black pieces with coral handles.

A JAPANESE netsuki accents this gold bag with crystal beads for handle.

PURPLE silk bag is complemented by amethyst handle.

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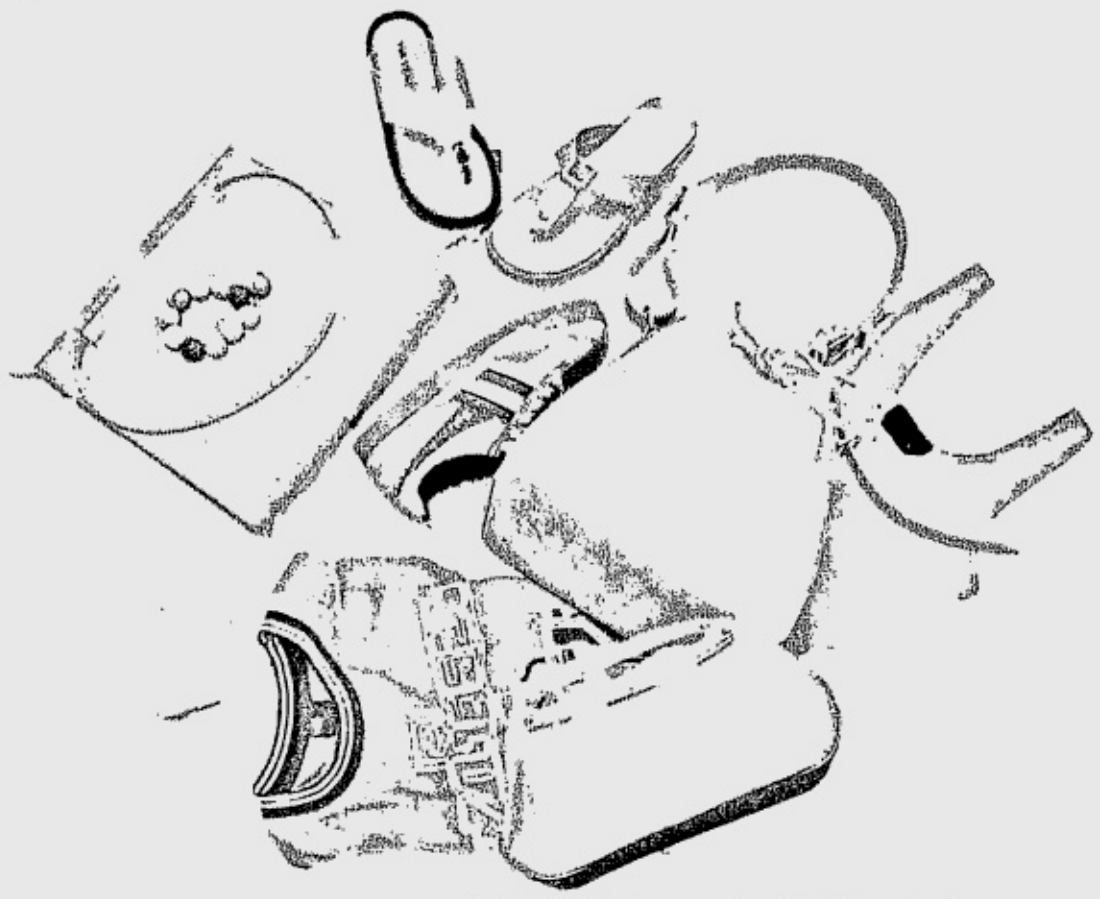

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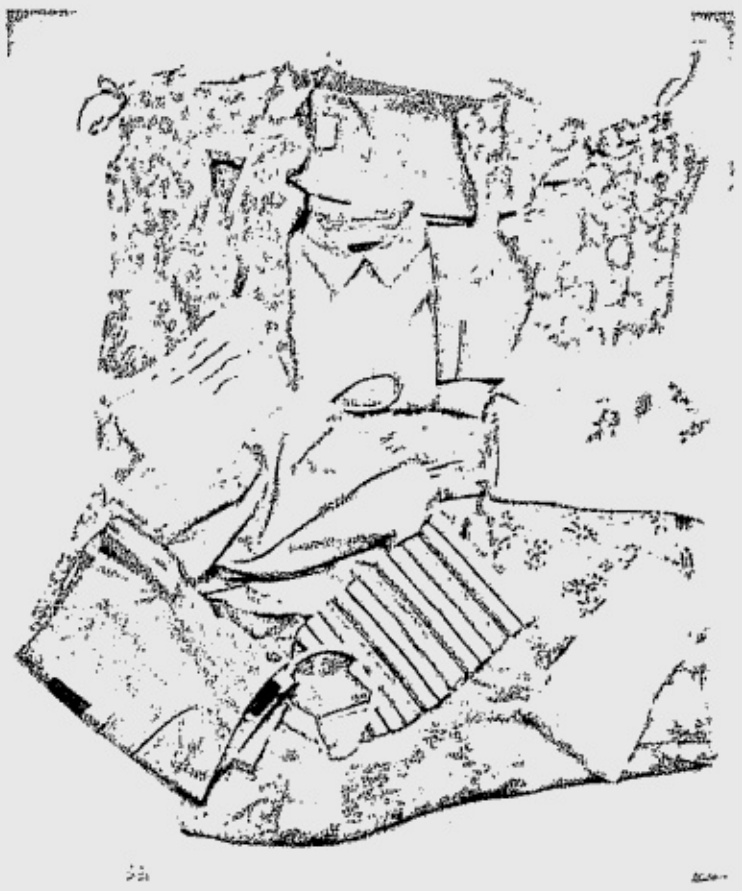

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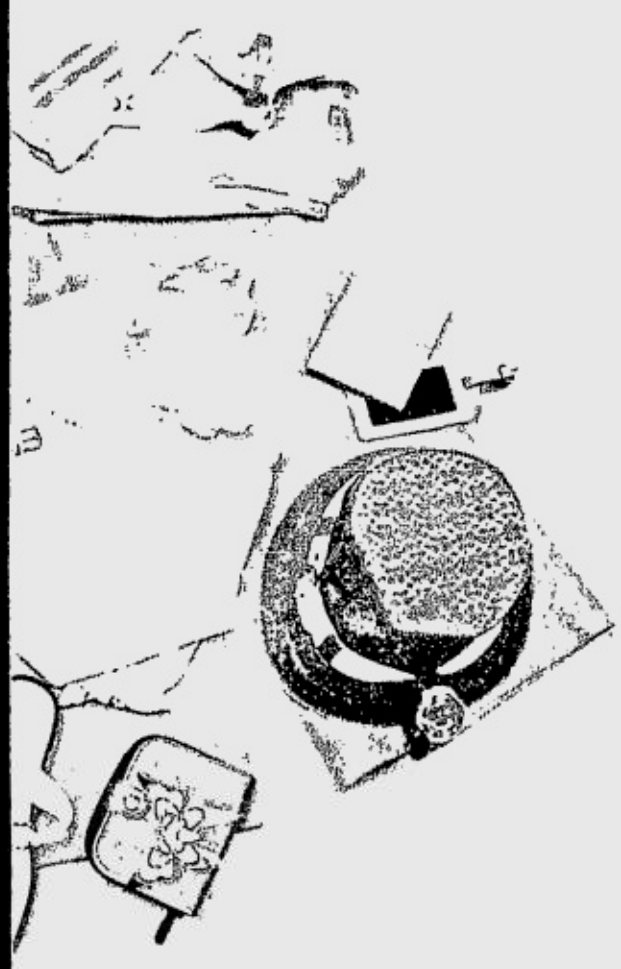

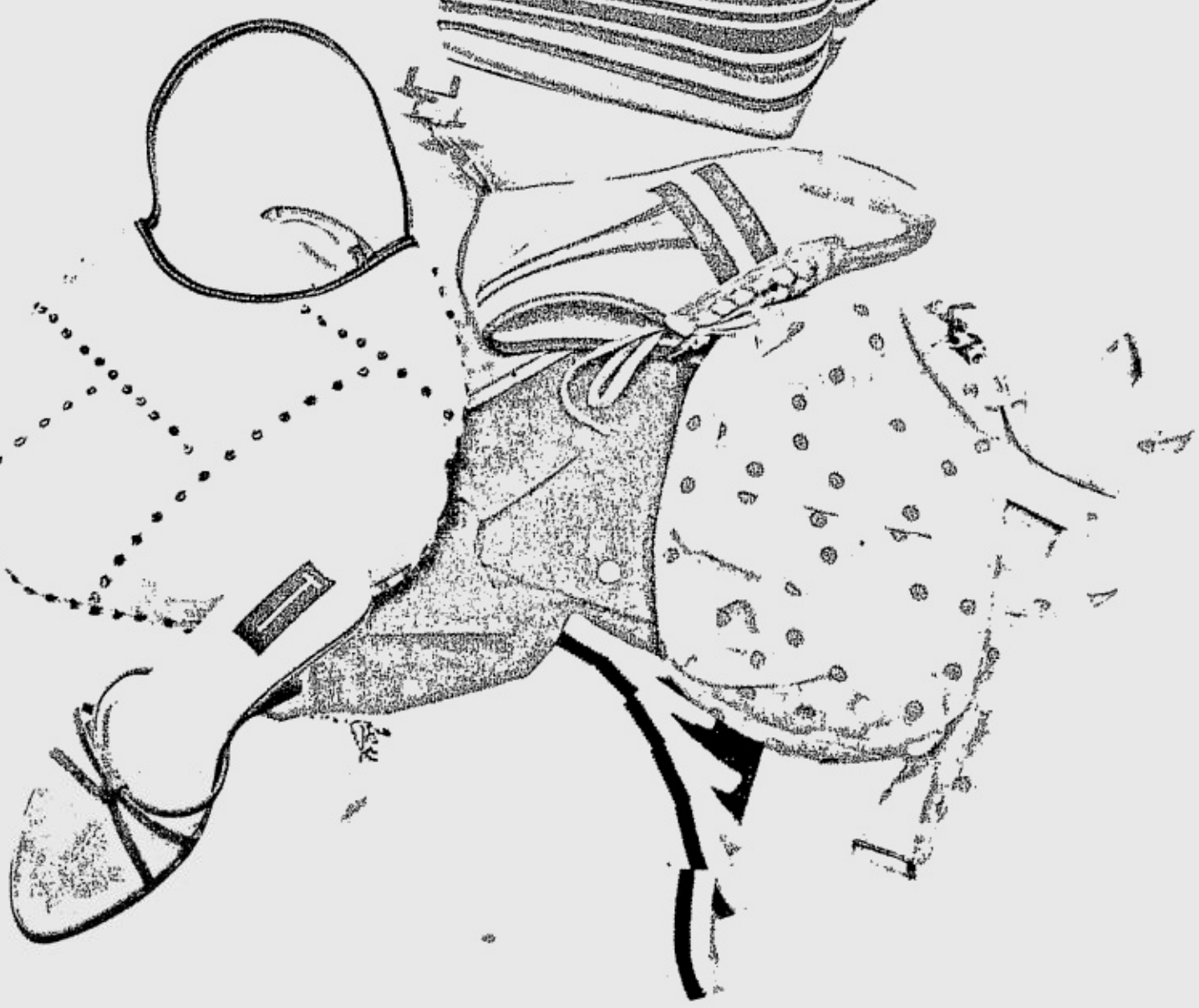

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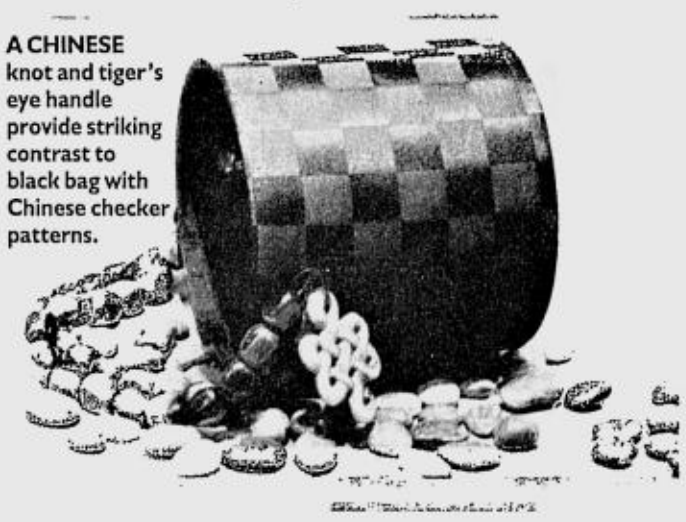

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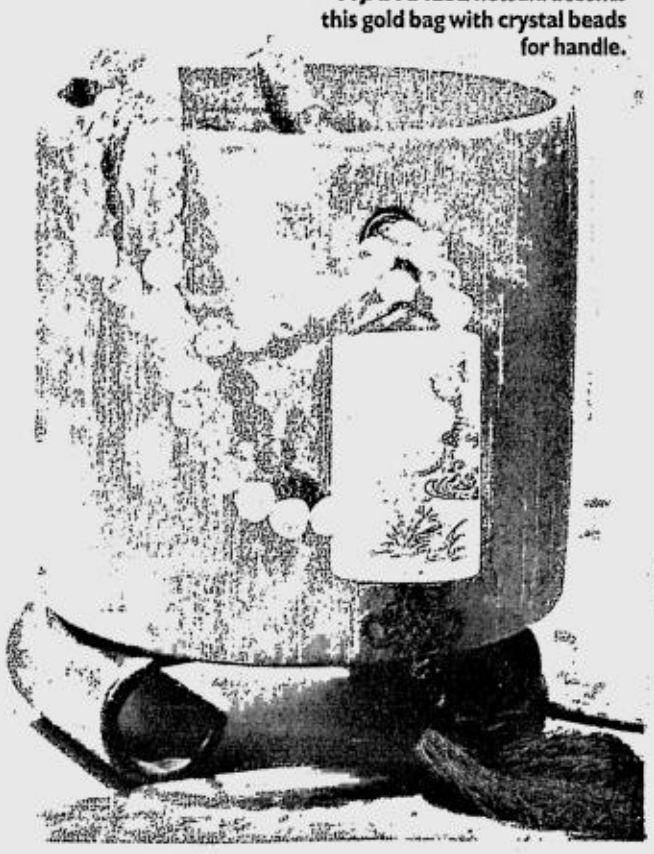

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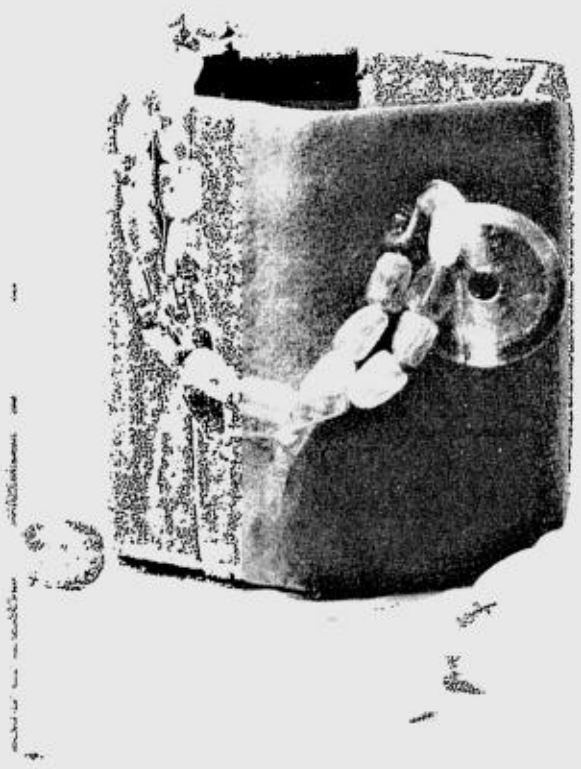

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